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The County Archaeologies

*General Editor: T. D. KENDRICK, M.A.*

SOMERSET

## THE COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGIES

*General Editor* : T. D. KENDRICK, M.A.

Assistant Keeper in the Department of British  
and Medieval Antiquities at the British Museum.

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*PLATE I*



HARPOON AND SHELL NECKLACE FROM AVELINE'S HOLE, BURRINGTON  
Harpoon, 4 inches long



BATON FROM CHEDDAR (!)

# THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF SOMERSET

BY

D. P. DOBSON, M.A.

WITH 7 MAPS AND 58 ILLUSTRATIONS



METHUEN & CO. LTD.  
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## PREFACE

**S**OMERSET is the seventh largest county in England, and it is exceptionally rich in archaeological material. Obviously in a book of this size everything cannot be included, and indeed the time is not yet ripe for a complete regional survey of the county. But the present volume represents an attempt to summarize, as far as possible, the archaeological discoveries that have been made in the county up to the end of 1930. To theorize as to the significance of these facts is another and more difficult matter. The archaeologist of to-day needs the attributes of the bird or the mole; for the explanation of many terrestrial phenomena can only be obtained by the help of an aeroplane or a spade. Meanwhile the patient marshalling of known facts may perhaps prove of value to the worker of the future, who will be furnished with knowledge denied to the present generation, but likely to be amassed as the result of the great amount of work now being carried out all over the country. This glimpse into the past may also serve to increase the pleasure that travellers will find in exploring this beautiful district. It is a long time since Lord Bacon wrote that 'Out of monuments, names, words, proverbs, traditions . . . and the like, we do save and recover somewhat from the deluge of time'. That flood sweeps along now faster than ever before, and more than ever is it necessary to record what is left, and so to place it high and dry, out of reach of the waters of oblivion.

The distribution maps were plotted on the  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch to a mile Ordnance Survey maps. It was not possible, working to this scale, to secure accuracy in locating the sites. Nothing has been aimed at beyond assigning each

find to its own parish, and, where possible, the parish church has been chosen as marking the village. In spite of this limitation, the maps do serve to give a general idea as to the distribution of the vestiges, as far as we have recognized them, left to us by each succeeding culture or civilization.

In the case of the Anglo-Saxon period, the villages mentioned in the Domesday Survey have been marked, as well as the scanty finds of Anglo-Saxon artifacts.

There are many workers, both in the past and the present, to whose labours this book is deeply indebted. It is impossible to thank them all individually, but the author most gratefully acknowledges help from many fellow-members of the University of Bristol Spelaeological Society, specially Professor E. K. Tratman (who was to have collaborated in the writing of the book had promotion not carried him across the earth), and also from the admirable notes of the late John A. Davies, whose early death has deprived the district of one of its best workers, from the President, Dr. E. Fawcett, F.R.S., and from Dr. Herbert Taylor, who has read the book in typescript and made valuable suggestions. Much help has been given by the Staff of the Bristol Museum; by Mr. St. George Gray, F.S.A., at the County Museum, Taunton; by Captain Clayton at Glastonbury, Mr. H. Balch, F.S.A., at Wells, Mr. P. E. Martineau at Bath, and the Librarian and his Assistants at the Bristol University Library. Professor S. H. Reynolds, Sc.D., has kindly revised the chapter on Geology, Mr. M. A. C. Hinton has helped with the Pleistocene fauna, and Mr. W. W. Jervis, Reader in Geography in the University of Bristol, provided the base map, on which the distribution is recorded, from his Department.

I am indebted to various societies and individuals for permission to reproduce illustrations, and should like to express my gratitude to the Trustees of the British Museum for Plate IVA and Figures 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17; to the Council of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society for Plates IB, IIIB, and VA, and Figures 2 and 26;

to the Committee of the Spelaeological Society of the University of Bristol for Figures 5 and 13; to the Proprietors of Gough's Cave, Cheddar, and Mr. R. F. Parry for Figure 2; to the Society of the Antiquaries of London and the Right Reverend Father Ethelbert Horne and Doctor A. Bulleid for Plate VA and Figure 18; to the Clarendon Press, Oxford, Mr. O. G. S. Crawford and Mr. A. Keiller for Figure 28; to the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office and to the Director-General, Ordnance Survey, for permission to reproduce the air photograph of Dolbury Camp; to Doctor A. Bulleid and Mr. St. George Gray for Plate IVB; to Mr. A. J. Taylor, F.R.I.B.A., for his drawings reproduced in Figures 19 and 20; for photographs to Dr. C. Bruce Perry (Plate II), Captain Clayton (Plate VB), and Alderman Mitchelmore (Plate IVA); to Dr. Herbert Taylor for Frontispiece IA; to Mr. E. T. Leeds for Plate VI; to Father Horne for Plate VIIA; for drawings to Dr. Bryan Adams (Figure 1); to Mr. Stanley Jones for Figure 11; for the loan of the following drawings to Mr. T. D. Kendrick, Figures 8, 9, 22 and 23; for permission to illustrate the Wraxall Torque to the Director of the Bristol Museum; for the Pitney Brooch to Miss Dudman; and for help in drawing the skull outlines to Professor Fawcett, M.D., F.R.S. Finally, it is difficult to acknowledge adequately the unfailing kindness, patience and wisdom of the editor, Mr. T. D. Kendrick.

DINA PORTWAY DOBSON

*Bristol,*  
*March, 1931*

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**T**HIS bibliography only includes the principal books which deal mainly with Somerset, during this period. A mass of material of the greatest importance is contained in the *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society*, including the Bath Branch, which publishes its proceedings in a separate volume; in the *Proceedings of the University of Bristol Spelaeological Society*, and in the *Victoria County History of Somerset*. The Bristol Naturalists' and Bath Field Clubs also contain material that is necessary for the Geology, Palaeontology and early Archaeology of the county. Details of the articles in these publications are given in the Gazetteer, and so are not repeated here. References to other books, and articles in the Transactions of societies which do not confine themselves to this district, are also contained in footnotes and in the Gazetteer.

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Allcroft	. . .	Earthwork of England. A. Hadrian Allcroft. 1908.
Antiq. Jour.	. . .	Journal of the Society of Antiquaries of London.
Arch.	. . .	Archaeologia.
Arch. Jour.	. . .	Journal of the Archaeological Institute.
Bath Field Club	. . .	Bath Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club.
B. & G. Arch. Soc.	. . .	Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society.
Bristol Naturalists.	. . .	Proceedings of the Bristol Naturalists' Society.
B.M.	. . .	British Museum.
Burrow.	. . .	Ancient Earthworks and Camps of Somerset. Ed. J. Burrow.
B.U.S.S.	. . .	Proceedings of the University of Bristol Spelaeological Society.
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E.I.A.	. . .	Early Iron Age.
Evans, Bronze	. . .	Ancient Bronze Implements of Great Britain and Ireland. Sir John Evans. 1881.
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xi

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Wilts. Archaeol. . .	The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine.

When an object is said to be at Taunton, it is in the Museum of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society at Taunton. When at Bristol, it is in the Bristol Museum.

# CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
	PREFACE . . . . .	v
	BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	viii
	LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS . . . . .	x
I	THE GEOLOGY OF SOMERSET . . . . .	1
II	THE PALAEOLITHIC AGE . . . . .	8
III	BEAKERS AND MEGALITHS . . . . .	34
IV	THE BRONZE AGE . . . . .	64
V	THE EARLY IRON AGE . . . . .	99
VI	ROMAN SOMERSET . . . . .	130
VII	SAXON SOMERSET . . . . .	161
VIII	CAMPS . . . . .	190
IX	MISCELLANEOUS EARTHWORKS AND TRACKS . . . . .	208
	ARCHAEOLOGICAL GAZETTEER . . . . .	228
	APPENDIX I. LIST OF MUSEUMS IN SOMERSET . . . . .	260
	APPENDIX II. ROMANO-BRITISH AND SAXON SKELETONS . . . . .	263
	INDEX . . . . .	265

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT

FIG.		PAGE
1.	FLINT HAND-AXE, BROOME GRAVELS . . .	10
2.	FLINT IMPLEMENTS FROM CHEDDAR . . .	15
3.	OUTLINES OF SKULLS FROM BURRINGTON AND CHEDDAR . . . . .	30
4.	THE CULBONE BEAKER . . . . .	39
5.	BOWL FROM ROWBERROW CAVERN . . . .	42
6.	PLAN OF STANTON DREW CIRCLES . . . .	61
7.	BRONZE AGE POTTERY FROM MENDIP BARROWS .	76
8.	BRONZE KNIFE FROM LANSDOWN . . . .	84
9.	BRONZE DOUBLE-LOOPEd PALSTAVE . . . .	86
10.	SUN DISC FROM LANSDOWN . . . . .	91
11.	BRONZE ANVIL FROM FLAX BOURTON. . . .	94
12.	POTTERY FROM GLASTONBURY LAKE VILLAGE .	110
13.	TWO BROOCHES FROM READ'S CAVERN, BURRINGTON	118
14.	HARNESS FROM POLDEN HILLS . . . . .	121
15.	SHIELD BOSS FROM POLDEN HILLS . . . .	122
16.	FIBULA FROM POLDEN HILLS . . . . .	123
17.	CLEVEDON GOLD TORQUE . . . . .	124
18.	GROUND PLAN OF KEYNSHAM VILLA . . . .	137
19.	HEAD OF SUL FROM BATH. . . . .	146
20.	PLAN OF ROMAN BATHS, BATH . . . . .	147
21.	OUTLINES OF SAXON SKULLS FROM CAMERTON AND GLASTONBURY . . . . .	174

# xiv THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF SOMERSET

FIG	PAGE
22-23. SAXON BROOCHES FROM ILCHESTER . . .	182
24. SAXON BROOCH FROM PITNEY . . . . .	183
25. PLAN OF AVON CAMPS . . . . .	195
26. OBJECTS FROM HAM HILL . . . . .	199
27. BANWELL EARTHWORK . . . . .	212
28. PLAN OF CELTIC FIELDS, BATHAMPTON DOWN . .	215

## LIST OF MAPS

DISTRIBUTION MAPS SHOWING THE LOCALITIES OF THE PRINCIPAL SITES AND DISCOVERIES IN THE FOLLOWING PERIODS:

	PAGES
PALAEOLITHIC AGE . . . . .	12-13
MEGALITHIC AGE . . . . .	48-49
BRONZE AGE . . . . .	68-69
EARLY IRON AGE . . . . .	128-129
ROMAN PERIOD . . . . .	132-133
SAXON PERIOD. . . . .	176-177
FOLDING MAP SHOWING THE VARIOUS SITES MENTIONED IN THE GAZETTEER . . . . .	<i>At end</i>

(From drawings by J. C. B. Redfearn)

# LIST OF PLATES

PLATE		FACING PAGE
I.	{ HARPOON AND SHELL NECKLACE } <i>(Photograph by Dr. H. Taylor)</i> BÂTON FROM CHEDDAR } <i>Frontispiece</i>	
II.	INTERIOR OF STONEY LITTLETON LONG BARROW <i>(Photograph by Dr. C. B. Perry)</i>	50
III.	{ WRAXALL TORQUE } { YEOVIL TORQUE } . . . . .	88
IV.	{ HALLSTATT BROOCHES FROM TAUNTON } AND WEST COKER { BOWL FROM GLASTONBURY } . . .	102
V.	{ CAMERTON DISC } { SAXON PIN AND DRAUGHTS } . . . . .	180
VI.	THE ALFRED JEWEL . . . . .	184
VII.	SAXON CROSSES FROM GLASTONBURY AND BATH	186
VIII.	AIR VIEW OF DOLBURY CAMP . . . . . <i>(Crown Copyright reserved)</i>	196



# THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF SOMERSET

## CHAPTER I

### THE GEOLOGY OF SOMERSET

**S**OMERSET is the seventh largest county in England, and contains over a million acres of land. Thus there is abundant space for the varied natural features which give such a charm to its scenery, and have provided conditions suitable for the habitation of mammals, including the human species, from very early times.

Geologically and geographically Somerset is divisible into three fairly well-marked sections—north, south, and west. North Somerset consists of a series of east and west trending ridges and uplifts composed in the main of Carboniferous limestone. The chief of these are the Mendips and Broadfield Down and the Failand Ridge and Plateau. Between these ridges lie coal-fields, partly buried under Trias deposits, while near the eastern boundary of the county Jurassic rocks, the continuation of the Cotteswolds, cover the older strata. Dundry Hill and other hills are outlying masses of the Cotteswolds.

The eastern part of South Somerset also consists of Jurassic rocks, while the western part is mainly composed of alluvium, through which appear Jurassic ridges such as the Polden Hills, and hills formed of horizontally lying Jurassic rocks separated by erosion from the main mass, such as Brent Knoll, Glastonbury Tor and Wedmore.

West Somerset differs totally from the rest and mainly consists of the high sandstone uplifts of Exmoor and the



## 2 THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF SOMERSET

Quantocks, separated from one another and partially surrounded by Triassic deposits such as form the Vale of Taunton.

Near the south-western boundary outlying patches of Cretaceous rocks cap the Blackdown Hills: and near Cricket St. Thomas the chalk can be seen exposed by the roadside.

The Mendips and adjacent hills of North Somerset form perhaps the most remarkable example existing in England of a very ancient landscape surviving to the present day. These hills assumed approximately their present form as the result of upheaval and erosion following shortly after the deposition of the Coal Measures. They were completely buried under a covering of Trias, Jurassic and later rocks but were re-exposed by the subsequent removal by erosion of this covering.

In travelling south through the county, and starting from the north-east corner, leaving behind the limestone of the Avon Gorge, the first hills reached are the Failand Ridge, which stretches almost due west from Bristol city to the sea. This ridge is mainly composed of Carboniferous limestone, as is the mass of Broadfield Down to the south, though the latter is bordered by rocks of the Triassic period, and has an exposure of volcanic rock at one place. Both these uplands seem to have been used by early man, but for limestone regions they are not rich in caves. Quite different is the case of Mendip, a great anticline of Carboniferous limestone, bordered by the Triassic series, and in its turn resting on the Old Red Sandstone which can be found on Blackdown, and east of Priddy. It does not take a geologist to perceive the main distribution of these two rocks, for while heather grows only reluctantly on limestone, it rejoices in the Old Red Sandstone: and thus as the pedestrian mounts Blackdown from Burrington or Cheddar the heather plants mark the emergence of the older rock. There is another superficial indication of this difference. While the Old Red Sandstone is comparatively impermeable to water, the limestone is subject not only to normal mechanical

erosion, but also to a chemical action by which water dissolves away the limestone, and so trickles down into the earth, to emerge, after dissolving for itself a subterranean passage, perhaps several miles away. This is well seen on the north side of Blackdown where there are two streams, known as the East and West twin streams, which have cut channels for themselves deep in the smooth surface of the hillside. Subsequently they vanish. They have reached the limestone, and so flow underground for some distance. Thus a limestone district is a thirsty district on the hill-tops, though swallet holes are numerous, down which the water has passed to form the caves such as Eastwater and Swildon's Hole with which the main mass of Mendip is honeycombed, and which in their turn appear, in some cases, to have collapsed to make the coombes and gorges which were so congenial to primitive man and beast. Chief among them are Burrington Coombe, Cheddar and Ebbor Gorges and Batts and Chelms Coombe.

The Mendips stretch from near Frome on the east to Winscombe on the north-west, with Bleadon as a continuation on the mainland and the Steep Holme in the Channel. On the north side the slope is relatively gradual, but on the south it is much steeper, and seen from the top of the Poldens the range looks very impressive. At Blackdown it passes the 1,000-foot contour line. It is less high towards its eastern end, and in the neighbourhood of Frome the old rocks disappear under a covering of oolites, the southward continuation of the Cotteswolds.

South-west of Mendip, and roughly parallel to it, there is a small hill range of Triassic and Liassic rocks on which the small town of Wedmore stands. These hills and Nyland, which differs from them in being formed of limestone and so is an outlier of Mendip, stand up in the plain and must have been, as indeed all the range must, islands when the plain was flooded.

The Polden Hills are formed of Lias with a southern fringe of Rhaetic beds, and they rise so gradually from the plain that they are very inconspicuous to-day, but

#### 4 THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF SOMERSET

they also must have been important when they stood out dry and habitable between the flooded vales of the Brue and Parrett.

Travelling south-west, the explorer is faced by the Quantocks reaching from a few miles north of Taunton to the shores of Bridgwater Bay. These hills also have their gradual slope to the north-east, and their steep side on the south. Like the Brendons and Exmoor, they are mainly composed of Devonian rocks, principally sandstone and slates. The range is very different from Mendip. Deeply clad in a vigorous growth of heather, it is cut up by coombes which have been eroded in the usual way from the surface downwards by water action. So that instead of forming a wide and almost unbroken plateau like the more northern hills, Quantock is cut up by numerous valleys in which trees grow with great luxuriance. Unsited in great tracts of their extent for pasturage or agriculture, the hills still nourish the wild red deer, and provide a piece of country inaccessible in many parts save on foot. The camps and barrows have not yet been fully explored, but are numerous enough to show that inhabitants were not wanting in early times.

The Brendons and Exmoor provide the greatest eminences in the county, and repeat the main geological features of the Quantocks. They also are formed mainly of Devonian rock, and are cut into coombes by streams. Dunkery Beacon reaches 1,707 feet and is the highest point, and Lucott Hill, Elworthy Barrow, and Selworthy Beacon are also above 1,000 feet high. Exmoor provides one of the largest tracts of uncultivated land to be found in the south of England, and for many square miles its elevation is not less than 500 and is often over 1,000 feet above sea-level. This must have helped to make it a congenial home for the peoples who lived before Christ, and the numerous barrows that are scattered over it confirm this supposition. Like Quantock, its archaeological exploration is far from complete.

The Blackdown Hills south of Taunton are a plateau of Trias capped by Greensand and much dissected by

stream courses. They are not so high as Exmoor, and are somewhat confusedly arranged, but reach 930 feet at Blackdown, and give rise to the rivers Yarty and Otter which have yielded many flint implements of early date. These hills consist of Greensand at Otterford and Chard, while the only chalk in the county appears at Combe St. Nicholas and Cricket St. Thomas.

The nature of the underlying rocks in any district is less important for pre-Conquest archaeology than for industrial purposes. The lead on Mendip was used in early times, and proved a great attraction to the Romans, and iron was discovered and worked before the Romans came. Ochre may also have had its uses, but the coal of the Radstock region lay undisturbed for many centuries after the Conquest. Building stone was a very important asset during the Middle Ages, and was appreciated by the Romans, but otherwise it was not extensively quarried until late in the Saxon period.

The alluvial plains which to-day form a large area of the surface of the county, and which provide pasturage rich enough to have given Cheddar cheese a world-wide reputation, were little used until the last five hundred years B.C. when the lake-dwellers found in their liability to flood a new kind of safety. The distribution maps, however, show that in Bronze Age times the foot-hills were occupied, and that numerous finds of bronze objects have been made even beneath the peat on the plains. The hoards were nearly all discovered on sites of very moderate elevation, while Stogursey is on low ground. When the Romans came they made the alluvial land more habitable by maintaining sea walls, which are still necessary to keep out the Severn when the tide is high and the wind from the west.

Forest must have clothed much of the land between this plain and the hills, and have proved a barrier to extensive agriculture until Roman times. The distribution of Roman villas on the high ground at Langport, where the Parrett cuts through the harder rocks, which make it a likely place for a ford or bridge, bears this out.

## 6 THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF SOMERSET

In places the formation of peat has gone on very rapidly since Bronze Age times, and on the Burnham and Huntspill levels it has grown to a depth of 12 feet since the Roman occupation.

Without doubt, in Pleistocene times, that is, in the geological epoch immediately preceding our own, the land stood at least 30 feet above its present level, and the Severn channel of to-day consisted to a great extent of a plain. Traces of the forest which clothed this plain, at any rate at the end of the period, can be seen at very low tide on the beach at St. Audries, Minehead and Porlock. There seems to have been practically no glaciation in Somerset in the Ice Age, so that the rocks visible belong to the locality where they are found, and have not been borne from afar by ice, and then dropped and left behind.

Somerset is not rich in large rivers ; but has to be content with her share in the Severn. The hills come so near to the coast in many places that this must be expected, and the distance from Severn Sea to the English Channel is so small that there is no chance for rivers to grow big. The Bristol Avon forms the boundary between Somerset and Gloucester for much of the lower part of its course, and is tidal up to Bristol. In his book on *English River Names*, Dr. Ekwall gives forty-six Somerset rivers, but many are to-day very insignificant. The Parrett, which rises in North Dorset, is 35 miles long, and meanders through Bridgwater to the sea, showing steep muddy banks where it is tidal. The northern Axe is a similar stream. The rivers flowing south are still small when they leave the county.

It is interesting to note that, according to Ekwall, twenty-seven Somerset rivers have names of British origin, five of undoubted English derivation and the rest doubtful, or back formations. Among the pre-English names are the Avon, Frome, Wellow, Parrett, Curry, Tone, Yeo, Oare, and others. Evidently the Saxon conquest or penetration of the west country was gradual enough for many of the ancient place-names to be accepted by the invaders.

Valley gravels remain in patches, and their investigation is only now proceeding ; but in time it may be possible to trace the history of the terraces of the Severn as exactly as those of the Thames or Seine : and meanwhile the gravels are yielding bones of extinct mammals, and implements of early man, and no doubt provided him with much of the flint which he used for various purposes. The most important gravels are at Broome, on the Dorset border, round the Avon at Bath, and Keynsham, Freshford, Bathampton, Saltford, Twerton, St. Anne's Park, the Avon Gorge, Abbot's Leigh, and Shirehampton. Other gravels not directly connected with the Avon of to-day are to be seen round the base of the Mendips, specially at Wells and Wookey, along the Brue and Parrett valleys, and near Chard ; rubble and blown sand have yielded important animal remains at Clevedon and Brean Down.

In the first volume of the *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society* Dean Buckland remarks, in the course of a summary of the geology of the county, that a good indication of the value of geological formations in any district is given by observing the comeliness of the inhabitants. He maintains that mountains breed poor animals, including human beings, while though the fertile plains may discourage enterprise because of the rich return they give to small effort, yet they promote physical beauty. If this be so, it appears that Somerset folk share what comeliness they may possess with their ancestors as far back as the Bronze Age, but throughout all the succeeding periods the tendency seems to have been more and more to desert the safe but hungry highlands for the rich but wooded valleys.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PALAEOLITHIC AGE

THE Palaeolithic, or the Old Stone Age, is the archaeological term applied to the last geological epoch ; that directly preceding the epoch in which we live to-day. It was a time during which all the present species of the animal world or their immediate ancestors were present on the earth, accompanied by a number of forms that have since become extinct.

It is in this period that man-like creatures, and finally man himself, appears. It is a time of tremendous climatic changes, accompanied by great extensions of the northern ice-cap, and hence the period is sometimes known as the Ice Age ; but this does not describe it adequately, as for long spaces of time during the Pleistocene period the climate in northern Europe was far hotter than it is to-day, and it seems actually to have been during one of these tropical interludes that the first man reached Britain.

Evidence from other areas proves, according to many geologists, that some form of man existed in the Pliocene epoch, which preceded the Pleistocene, while one school of archaeologists maintains that in the still earlier Miocene times some creature was shaping flints to his own use. Some of these first efforts of man at tool-making are called Eoliths, or Dawn Stones.<sup>1</sup> It is quite possible that some such may exist in the Somerset gravels, but it is certain that no trace of the creature who made them has yet been discovered in the West of England.

The implements made by man in the Early Pleistocene times are found in Somerset, as elsewhere, in the gravels left behind by the rivers which formerly watered the land.

<sup>1</sup> R. F. Jessup, *Archaeology of Kent* (London, 1930), pp. 1-11.

At this time the British Isles were joined to the Continent, and the English Channel and the Severn Sea were the valleys of tremendous rivers, the small remnants of which, in many cases, flow in the beds of their ancestors. The levels of the original rivers were, at different times, higher or lower than those of to-day, according to the relative levels of land and water, so that we can find the gravels in which Early Pleistocene man dropped his tools over 100 feet above the present river-level as well as below it. This has many times been proved true of the Thames, and evidence is beginning to be accumulated to show that it is equally true of the valleys of our western streams. When Middle Pleistocene times were reached the land-level was, generally speaking, higher than in the earlier epoch, so that the Mid-Pleistocene implements are found, as a rule, on a lower terrace than the earlier ones, unless the early implements have rolled down to the lower level.

The Pleistocene period has been divided by geologists into lower, middle, and upper horizons, in order of age, and these correspond to divisions in archaeology, characterized by the artifacts found in each. The archaeologists have not rested content with the geological divisions, but have further subdivided and named the epoch. Thus the Lower Palaeolithic period is called after the two French type stations of Chelles-sur-Marne and St. Acheul; the Middle Palaeolithic, from the cave of Le Moustier on the Dordogne; and the final horizons are known as Aurignacian, from Aurignac; Solutrean, from the open station of Solutré near Mâcon; and Magdalenian, from the cave of La Madeleine, also in the Dordogne district of France.

The most salient fact to grasp about the archaeology of the whole of the Palaeolithic period in Europe, is that throughout its duration, so far as we know at present, man was a hunter, depending for his food on the large and varied fauna, and ignorant of agriculture, the domestication of animals, and the manufacture of pottery. This hunting life implies certain restrictions which divide it from the conditions of modern life, and, indeed, of later prehistoric existence. Thus, so long as men depend upon



natural supplies of food, they can never become very numerous, for the game will only support a limited number of hunters. The population can never maintain a quite stationary existence, for the hunter must follow the game; and therefore he cannot cumber himself with what we call real property, nor indeed with much that is portable. His possessions are narrowed down to tools and weapons, personal ornaments, and, possibly, some sort of tent or shelter. Seasonal homes were no doubt practicable, and

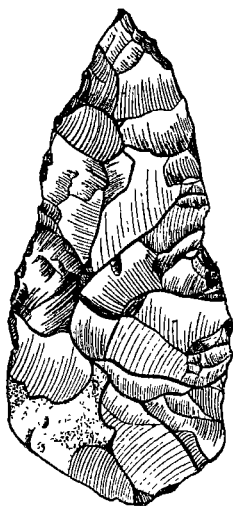


FIG. 1.—FLINT HAND-AXE, BROOME GRAVELS  
Length  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches

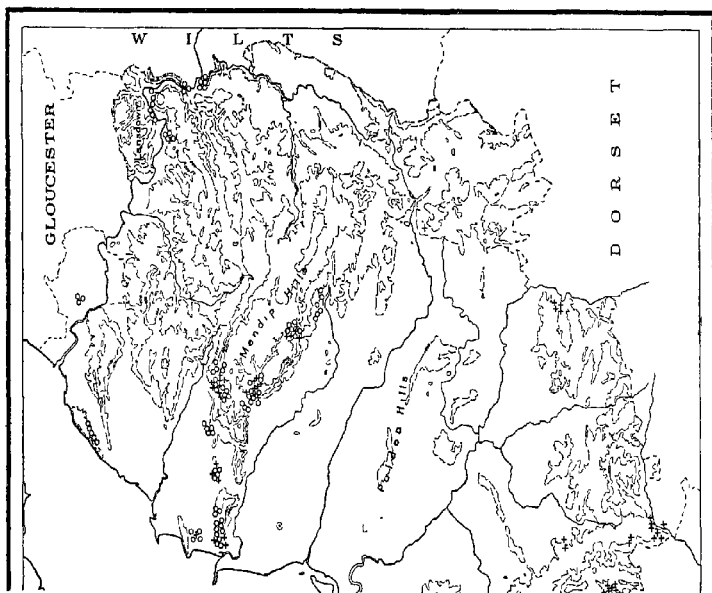
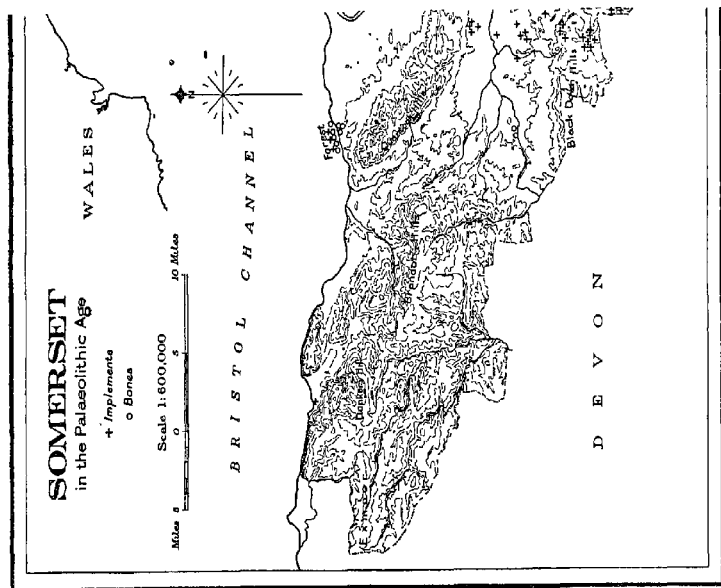
in this sense caves were occupied from Mousterian times onwards. Hunters, in the days of a fauna comprising such large beasts as the elephant tribe, must often have had leisure, no doubt alternating with spells of intense activity; so they had opportunity, if they wished, to indulge in handicrafts, and this opportunity was sometimes most happily used, as the pictures and carvings of the caves of France and Spain bear witness.

In the Lower Palaeolithic period man seems to have lived by the rivers. The climate was probably warm, and shelter was unnecessary, and the rivers may have provided the easiest pathways and the most abundant game, as well as the essential water. It is, then, in the river gravels that the earliest tools are found, and the best preserved in Somerset are from the Otter and Yarty streams, and from the gravels at Broome, on the borders of Somerset and Dorset. These implements are generally of the form known as hand-axes, and are roughly pear-shaped or ovoidal in form. They are usually chipped all over, though sometimes a piece of the crust is left intact. Some have a blunt, heavy end, as though they were to be held in the hand; others have a sharp edge all round,

which looks as though they were made to be thrown or hafted. Their size varies from a few inches to 8 or 9 inches in length. A certain number of flake implements were also manufactured at this time, but these are not so characteristic of the industry. A flake implement is one made by detaching a flake from the parent block after this has been duly prepared, and then touching up and finishing the flake as may be required. The implements from Broome are of a cherty flint, and can be seen at the County Museum at Taunton, in the Bristol Museum, in the Museum of the Spelaeological Society at Bristol, or at Exeter. Some appear as though they were but freshly chipped, while others are water-worn and rolled.

The sites in the county at which these implements have been found besides the beds of the rivers Otter and Yarty near their sources in the Blackdown Hills, are at Otterford, at Castle Cary and Castle Neroche, Chard, Shore-ditch, Staple Fitzpaine, Taunton, Trull, and as far north as the shores of the Bristol Channel, so that it seems to be possible that the ancient hunters entered the county from the south, followed the Otter and Yarty streams north over the Blackdown Hills, and then, after occupying the vale of Taunton, passed on to the banks of the ancient Severn. It is only quite recently that flints from the Severn and Avon gravels have been recorded; but during the last few years careful watching of excavations in the Bristol area has been rewarded by the discovery of implements of undoubtedly Lower and Middle Palaeolithic type. At Hanham, trenching for the new houses yielded six implements, some of which at least may be classed as Acheulean;<sup>1</sup> a perfect hand-axe of this type was found also in the Avon gravels at Shirehampton in 1929, while two others, possibly of a Chellean date, were picked up on the slope of Little Solisbury Hill, near Bath, in 1913, and can now be seen in the Museum of the Bath Philosophical and Literary Society, so that it seems possible that in Lower Palaeolithic times man roamed all over the country.

<sup>1</sup> *B.U.S.S.*, vol. 3, No. 3, pp. 162-172.



It is unfortunate that these artifacts have not been found in this district associated with the bones of the animals which must have been living at the time they were made. To discover these we must go to the caves where a great abundance of animal bones exists, as well as in the gravels. During Early Palaeolithic times, both Chellean and Acheulean, the fauna was African in character, and included such creatures as the straight-tusked elephant, *Elephas antiquus*, hippopotamus, lion, leopard, and spotted hyaena. The flora seems to suggest that the climate was warm.

The next period, the Mid-Pleistocene, or Mousterian, opened with the same fauna, but this gradually changed, and was replaced by animals of an Asiatic type, such as mammoth, rhinoceros of two kinds, *Tichorhinus* and *Haemiteochus*, cave and brown bears, and a host of smaller creatures. Partly owing to the natural overlap of these faunas, and partly owing to a less careful attention to stratification in the work of the earlier investigators than is demanded by the standards of to-day, the remains of these two groups of animals have, in several cases, been found together.

Before considering the sites in which these bones occur in Somerset, it may be as well to mention the vexed question of climate, which cannot be completely ignored. Luckily, for archaeological purposes it is only necessary to trouble about one great cold period, which reached its maximum somewhere about the Mid-Mousterian times. The ice then covered the north of England, and though in Somerset there is no actual trace of glaciation, yet the near neighbourhood of the ice on the Welsh hills must have produced very chilly conditions. In spite of this, man seems to have been able to hold his own both with the climate and the great beasts, for traces of the flints which he worked have been found in the gravels at Twerton, Freshford, and Shirehampton, and in the low layers of the wind-blown sand at Walton Bay, near Clevedon. So far, no bones of Mousterian man have been discovered in the county, but something of his physique is

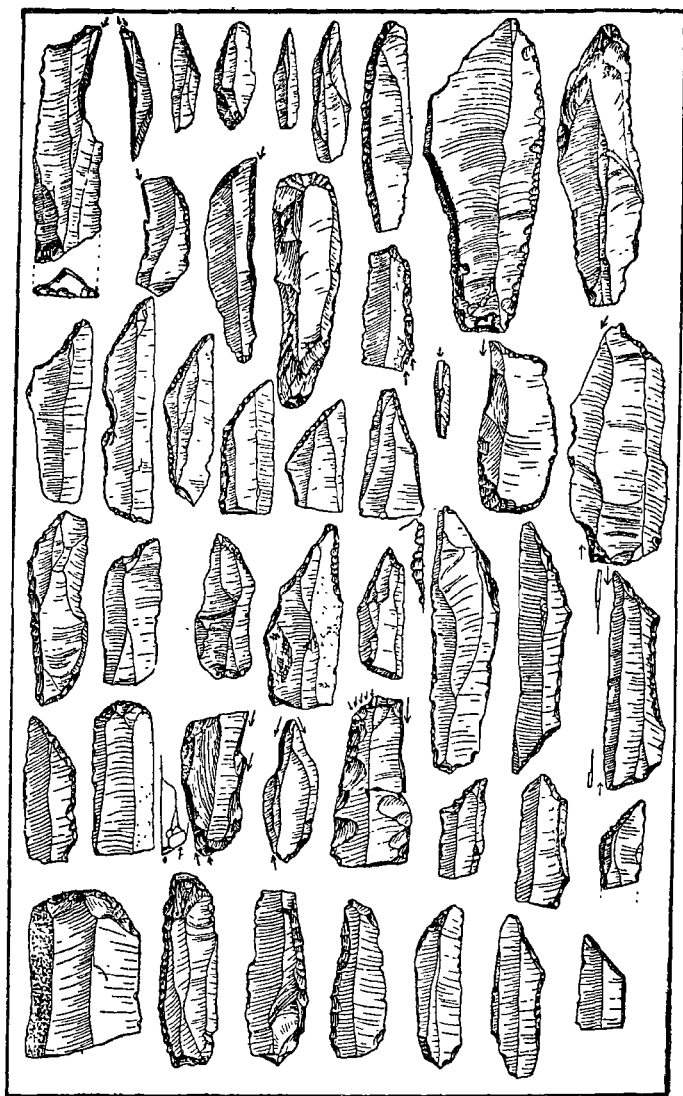


FIG. 2.—FLINT IMPLEMENTS FROM GOUGH'S CAVE, CHEDDAR

Longest Blade,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches

known from the skulls and, indeed, skeletons found in the type station of this period at Le Moustier in France, and Neanderthal in Germany. He seems to have been a clumsy creature, with a receding forehead, massive jaws, and big teeth of a type called Taurodont, with ungainly limbs which may have indicated a shambling gait. As the climate ameliorated with the recession of the ice, the country reached the tundra stage, and this led to the irruption into it of a new type of man, known, from a cave at Les Eyzies in France, as the Cro-Magnon race. These men seem to have been, physically, as fine a type as the best men of to-day, and appear to have succeeded in wiping out, or at any rate in dominating, the Neanderthal savages, and in importing into Britain their own most characteristic Upper Palaeolithic culture. They had as their contemporaries a new series of animals suited to the new conditions, such as reindeer and lemming (*Lemmus Lemmus*), while others, including woolly rhinoceros and mammoth, in their turn became extinct.

One of the earliest sites yielding Pleistocene remains was the fissure on Durdham Down, Clifton.<sup>1</sup> To any one who sees the Downs on a half-holiday covered with footballers and their admirers, or on a Bank holiday, the resort of many holiday-makers, it is difficult to imagine them as part of the great plain that is now the Bristol Channel, over which ranged such beasts as elephants, rhinoceros, horses, bison, and a few hippopotami, all apt to fall a prey to the hungry lions, bears and hyaenas. The fissure is not now visible; indeed, its actual site is no longer known, but it was discovered in 1842, and was a perpendicular fissure of variable depth, traceable to a depth of nearly 90 feet from the surface. The upper part was wide enough to allow the entrance of animals of moderate size, and at a depth of about 20 feet there was a bigger chamber to which the animals could climb. Like the small cave at Wookey, this seems to have been used as a hyaena den, and the majority of the bones were probably

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Br. Nat.*, N.S., vol. V, 1885, pp. 42-4; *Cave Hunting*, Boyd Dawkins, p. 291; *V.C.H.*, I, p. 170.

those of the victims of these beasts. The species included deer, elephant, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, and ox, thus comprising both the African and Asiatic fauna, so the collection probably represented a long period of time. This is also true of another lost cave, at Hutton, which was first noticed by ochre-diggers in 1759.<sup>1</sup> The entrance fell in, and was rediscovered in 1825. The whole area is now thickly overgrown with brambles and riddled with old mine workings, so that the exact identification of the bone cave is impossible. The chief species of animals whose bones were found were again lion, leopard and hippopotamus, together with the later series, including reindeer and lemming. The flints belonged to Palaeolithic times, and are probably Aurignacian. They can be seen in the Weston Museum. The Uphill cave, now quarried away, produced some flints now in the Bristol Museum, and some at Weston.<sup>2</sup> They have been described as Aurignacian, with one point suggesting a Solutrean industry. The associated animals were mostly cave bear and lemming.

For any one who wants to get some idea of a bone cave, there is still Banwell. The Banwell bone cave was, according to tradition, first discovered at the end of the eighteenth century, and like Hutton, by workmen seeking for ochre, calamine and lead. It was reopened about 1827, when the work of Professor Buckland had given a stimulus to research. Then a farmer named Beard, together with a miner named Webb, bethinking them of the story of a great cave on the hill, set to work to clear a choked mine shaft, and so disclosed the famous bone cave. There an almost unbelievable number of bones were discovered, all tumbled together, and evidently carried into the cave by water action. These have now been sorted, and placed in heaps at the side of the cave, which is reached by a flight of rough steps. The whole resembles a medieval ossuary. In the lower part of the cave some bones have been left in their original position.

<sup>1</sup> Rutter, p. 100; *V.C.H.*, I, pp. 170-1; *B.U.S.S.*, vol. 2, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> Rutter, p. 78.

embedded in sand and loam. In this cave, bear was the predominant beast ; while horse was entirely absent, the bear was of both the cave and brown species. The great pachyderms had by this time passed away with the hyaena ; Mr. M. A. C. Hinton has identified lemming and a water vole, *Arvicola Abbotti*, which proves that the occupation belonged to the Late Pleistocene. Flint implements were found, but no human bones.

Sandford cave had the cold-loving or Asiatic fauna, together with a great number of lion bones, and also squirrel. No worked flints were found.

Recently bones have been found belonging to much the same period in the gravels at Holly Bush Lane, Clevedon, and at Brean Down.<sup>1</sup> The sands associated with these gravels were deposited by the wind, and those at Clevedon have yielded great quantities of horse, while reindeer and arctic lemming have been found at Brean.

The most interesting and accessible of all these caves to-day is the Hyaena Den Cave at Wookey.<sup>2</sup> This is therefore worth a fuller description than the others. It is in a ravine on the south side of Mendip, about 2 miles west of Wells. The ravine runs roughly north and south, into the Mendip range, and its end is blocked by a rock face 200 feet high. At the foot of the precipice, more fully described in the chapter on the Early Iron Age, flows out the River Axe, and a channel was cut for it in the year 1852, to lead some of the water to the paper works farther down the valley. In this way the mouth of the cave known as the Hyaena Den was cut through, but no work was undertaken in it until 1859. From that year until 1863 it was systematically excavated for some weeks each season by the late Sir William Boyd Dawkins and his friends. The cave is not very large, and the roof is fairly low. The entrance now is wide, and faces west of north. An enormous number of bones rested inside, and it was clear that they were not borne there by water, but were dragged in by hyaenas, for practically

<sup>1</sup> *B.U.S.S.*, vol. 3, p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> *Cave Hunting*, Dawkins, pp. 295-317.



all were gnawed and broken, even those of the hyaenas themselves ; and the teeth marks and fractures are similar to those taken from the cages of the hyaenas in the Zoo to-day. Coprolites of the animals and the shed milk teeth of the young were also found, showing that the cave was really used as a den. From the way in which some of the leg bones of the larger animals were broken, it is probable that the Wookey hyaenas followed a method of hunting pursued by their brothers elsewhere. They combined to drive their victims over the cliff, and then tackled the creatures when they were maimed, and finally dragged the bones into the cave to be devoured at leisure.

But the hyaenas did not have the cave all to themselves. Near the entrance the excavators found abundant charcoal and worked flints, while some of the bones were also burnt, so that at certain periods man must have chased away the hyaenas and taken possession of the cave himself. The implements, which are of Aurignacian and Solutrean types, are composed of flint and chert, the latter from the upper Greensand of the Blackdown Hills. They may be seen in the Bristol Museum. No human bones were found.

The animal bones were so numerous that between three and four thousand were removed during one year's work ; and this number would have been greater had the bones not been so soft that many crumbled away when they were touched. Perhaps the chief characteristic of the fauna was the preponderance of horse, and this is particularly interesting, because horse seems to have been the principal food of the Aurignacian and Solutrean men at Solutré itself. The wandering hunters may have chosen to live where there were abundant supplies of that particular food. The following list of the animals whose teeth and jaws were recorded by Boyd Dawkins for one year 1862-3, will give a rough idea of the fauna, and also of the relative numerical proportions of the animals.

Cave hyaena . . . . .	467
Cave lion . . . . .	15
Cave bear . . . . .	27
Grizzly bear . . . . .	11
Brown bear . . . . .	11
Wolf . . . . .	7
Fox . . . . .	8
Mammoth . . . . .	30
Woolly rhinoceros . . . . .	233
Rhinoceros Haemiteochus . . . . .	2
Horse . . . . .	401
Great urus (Ox) . . . . .	16
Bison . . . . .	30
Irish elk . . . . .	35
Reindeer . . . . .	30
Red deer . . . . .	2
Lemming . . . . .	1
Flint implements . . . . .	35

This is not the place in which to consider the animals in detail, but it may be of interest to note that the cave lion was larger than the modern species, the cave bear was so big that his canine teeth were quite 4 inches long, the mammoth was far larger than the elephants of to-day, the woolly rhinoceros was a huge beast with two horns, and the Irish elk had a span of 14 feet across its horns. When we think of man, armed only with flint weapons, dealing, and dealing successfully, with these huge and fierce creatures, we feel a great respect for him, and are ready to award him his title of 'sapiens'. Together with these big beasts there were many that were very small, but some that are, all the same, of great use to palaeontologists. The lemming is a vole-like creature now inhabiting cold climates, but its tiny teeth are found in many cave deposits, and are of great aid in dating the deposits in which they occur. No one should attempt to dig a cave who is not ready to observe and preserve these and other rodent teeth and bones.

Throughout the Aurignacian, or the earliest part of the

Upper Palaeolithic period, the climate was getting steadily warmer, and the edges of the ice sheet were retreating ; and, as a result, great areas of land were exposed which had hitherto been covered. The soil so liberated was friable, and great dust storms were of common occurrence ; so that in time great wind-blown or loess deposits were laid down. Such ' new loess ' soil (so called to distinguish it from the far more ancient ' old loess ') can be found in Somerset at Holly Bush Lane, Walton, and at Brean Down, and this exposure and drying up of Europe opened up another route for immigration from the East into the West and North, and fresh people came in along the wide stretch of grassland which we call the loess belt. These folk are called Solutrean, and the type station Solutré, north of Mâcon, is not a cave, but the side of a limestone hill, beneath a beetling crag, and on a slope of reddish-brown earth thickly covered to-day with rock roses and aromatic shrubs. The coming of these people is marked by a great change in the character of the implements. In Chellean and Acheulean times the majority of implements, as we have seen, were core-implements. These tools were generally of large size. In Mousterian times it would seem that perhaps flint was not quite so common, or else conditions had changed, for the majority of implements are now flake implements, and therefore generally smaller than the earlier types. They have been made by shaping the flint block into the required form, and then striking off a flake with one sharp blow, and so creating the desired implement. Further retouching was sometimes necessary, but one side was usually kept flat and untouched. Occasionally core-implements were made, and in some parts of France large blocks of flint are found from which many flakes have been struck. It has sometimes been possible to find the flakes and to replace them in their original position, thus leaving no doubt as to their mode of manufacture. A large block of flint, possibly such a core, was found at Slab House, on the main Bristol-Wells road.

In the Aurignacian period the implements were made

from flakes also struck from a flint core, and brought by secondary chipping into end scrapers, side scrapers, pointed knives with the back chipped in such a way as to make them blunt for holding in the hand, and a group known as burins, of which the chief characteristic is a chisel-like edge which was used for cutting and engraving bone and antler implements. Thus though the edges might be chipped either to make them blunt or sharp as required, the upper and lower surfaces were left untouched.

The men of Solutré introduced a new technique in which the whole or part of the lower or bulbar surface of the flint flake and even the upper surface as well was chipped. This was never done by actual blows, but invariably by pressure with a piece of wood, or bone, or another flint. The resulting implement thus shows surfaces from which a large number of thin, scale-like flakes have been removed, foreshadowing the beautiful implements of the Bronze Age. These Solutrean knives at their best are called laurel leaves by the French because of their symmetrical and lanceolate shape.

It was originally thought that this culture had not a very wide range in England, but excavations in recent years have extended it,<sup>1</sup> and in Somerset flints of this type have been found at Wookey Hole, at Uphill, from whence they have reached the Bristol Museum, and from Soldier's Hole, Cheddar. This small cave opens 100 feet above the road on the south side of the Cheddar Gorge, about 200 yards above Gough's show cave, and to reach it is a somewhat severe task, specially for the last twenty yards, where the help of a rope is very welcome to persons whose heads for heights are imperfect. From this site, happily secured from the casual despoiler by its position, Mr. R. F. Parry in 1929 dug out two magnificent examples of Solutrean implements which may be seen in the Museum at Gough's cave, Cheddar.

<sup>1</sup> It is considered possible by some people that a hoard of eleven large flint knives found by Balch in a rock shelter in Ebbor Gorge in 1928 may be proto-Solutrean also. (*Antiq. Jour.*, VIII, pp. 197-204.)

In the Upper Ebbor shelter Mr. Balch found a small piece of bone on which is incised a design like the Eskimo symbol for three men in a canoe.

The upgrade in the climate now began to give way to a readvance of the ice for a short time, known as the Buhl advance. The increase in the cold was marked by a disappearance of the Solutrean culture and the reappearance of a developed form of the Aurignacian, which in France has changed so much that it has a new name, Magdalenian, from the cave of La Madeleine in the Dordogne. Here, then, England tends to break away from the continental tradition, and though, as abroad, the industry is a poor one, of inferior technique, England cannot produce the great number of implements in bone and antler which characterize the period abroad, where they superseded flint to a great extent. This culture in England has been termed Cresswellian by Miss Garrod, after the site in Derbyshire, and it has been suggested that we may finally find reason to believe that, at any rate in the West, we have no true Aurignacian implements, but only this post-Solutrean culture, forming the great mass of our Upper Palaeolithic material.

This final phase of the Palaeolithic is very richly represented in Somerset, certainly as richly as anywhere in England. Nearly every cave where there is an appreciable depth of deposit has yielded a few implements of the period, but the two main districts for its distribution are the coombes on the north and south sides of Mendip, Burrington and Cheddar. We will take the better known first. Cheddar Gorge runs roughly at right angles to the main axis of the Mendip range, that is, north-east by south-west. It is too well known to need a detailed description, and it is best seen by descending it from the high ground. In this way the valley is found gradually to deepen until the towering rocks on either side form a ravine, at the foot of which lies the road, following a serpentine course. The rocks, of mountain limestone, are weathered into gullies and bastions, and are, in places, overhung with ivy. The

words, written of another scene, would equally well fit Cheddar :

‘ Not a setting beam could glow  
 Into the dark ravine below,  
 Where twined the path, in shadow hid  
 Round many a rocky pyramid.’

The Cheddar water, a small tributary of the Northern Axe, issues from a cave at the base of the rock on the south side, just below the famous show cave of Mr. Gough. This cave opens beneath an overhanging rock, and has long been adapted for public inspection. It is now lighted with electricity through much of its extent, and its stalagmites and stalactites, some dazzling white, and others coloured pink, red, and brown, give some idea of the beauties of the nether-world of Mendip, which can be seen also in Mr. Cox’s beautiful show cave lower down the Gorge.

Evidence of human occupation of this cave (Gough’s) was recorded as early as 1863 by Boyd Dawkins ; and during the last ten years careful work in excavating the entrance and upper parts of the cave have been carried out by permission of Mr. Gough. So rich is Cheddar in caves that this is not the original show cave, which was discovered in 1877, and was about 30 feet east of the present cave. The finds from both caves are conveniently housed in a museum near the entrance to the show cave, where they can be inspected by the public. The most complete description of the finds is in the *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological Society*, volume LXXIV, pp. 102-19. The flints are very numerous, and were nearly all made from fresh chalk flint nodules. There seems to have been no scarcity in the supply of this material at Cheddar (fig. 2). ‘ A large proportion of the implements are elongated flakes. There are a few cores, and some lumps of unused flint.’ The patination grows in density until a certain layer is reached, below which it becomes lighter. Some of the fine specimens are as much as  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inches long ; most are between 1 and 3 inches. There are a certain number of microliths, or tiny implements, the exact use of which is

undetermined, unless they were set in bone or wood to form saws or sickles. Of this there is no evidence. The majority of the tools may be described as gravers, gravette points, piercers, side and other scrapers, and awls.

The greatest treasures of this cave are the only two English examples of bone objects called by the French 'Bâtons de Commandement' (see Plate I, frontispiece). One was discovered near the skeleton known as the Cheddar man, and the second during recent excavations. The 1927 example is the more perfect. It consists of part of the shaft of an antler bearing the stump of one of the tines, with a hole drilled through the broad part at the angle where the tine would have branched off. Originally these objects were believed to have been sceptres or ceremonial wands: but a more likely conjecture is that they were used for straightening the shafts of arrows. The hole in this case is pierced obliquely and is bevelled and set in the shaft with a twist. The more rounded face of the shaft is grooved by six bands of nearly parallel incised lines. The length of the object is 7 inches. The second 'bâton' is broken off in the middle of the hole. Found in 1903, it is ornamented with a single wide band of incised lines which curve round the shaft spirally. Its length is  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

This cave has also produced a cylindrical rod of ivory, probably mammoth, about  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, similar to that found in Kent's Cavern, Torquay,<sup>1</sup> and a number of fine bone points, the use of which is unknown, unless they were pins for holding together skin clothing. The tibia of an English *ranging hare* has been incised with scratches arranged in groups of four or five short strokes, as though a tally were being kept. There are also two pieces of stone engraved with lines, a few drilled canine teeth of dog or fox, and one or two beads made by piercing shells (*Neritoides obtusatus*) through the umbo. These latter were undoubtedly ornaments, meant for suspension, or to form a necklace. Here, then, we have the possessions of a Palaeolith family or tribe, personal ornaments, clothes-

<sup>1</sup> *Upper Palaeolithic Times in Britain*, Gifford, p. 43.

fasteners, tools, weapons and implements, and accounts. The mouth of the cave would have formed a good shelter, but would not have received much sunshine as it faces north-east, and the gorge is very deep.

The fauna is interesting, for hyaena and mammoth and woolly rhinoceros have vanished and given place to horse, bear, reindeer, red deer, boar, wolf, fox, and a number of characteristic small rodents. These suffice to place the deposits as early as the beginning of the Magdalenian period, sometimes called the reindeer period, though the occupation evidently persisted right through that epoch.

The Cheddar man can be seen in his glass case, a great, nearly complete skull, still partly encrusted with the stalagmite from which it was dug; here, however, it will be best to consider him in detail when the time comes to speak of his cousins from Burrington. Other caves in the Gorge have produced worked flints of this period and thirteen from Flint Jack's Cave are now in the British Museum.

Burrington Coombe is a cleft in the north side of Mendip, which begins to run with the main axis of the range north-west and south-east, and then takes a sharp turn and ends in a direction almost due north. It is a less spectacular valley than Cheddar Gorge, as the top is more open and the sides less sheer, and the bare rock less fully exposed. Nevertheless a walk up or down it discovers fine wild scenery, and where the rock rises steeply from the road, as it does above Aveline's Hole, the sloping strata of the rock and the numerous juniper bushes which find a foothold in the cracks make an impressive picture.

Opposite to the first place going up the coombe where the sides rise sheer, is the chimney in the rock known as the 'Rock of Ages', because it is said to have given shelter to the poet Toplady, and so to have inspired him to write the well-known hymn, 'Rock of Ages, cleft for Me'. Just above this point, and on the opposite (east) side of the road, at the foot of the cliff which here rises to about 100 feet, is a rift cavern, known locally as Aveline's Hole. It is 130 feet long, 12 feet wide, and its average height is



10 feet. Its discovery is well described by the following extract quoted in *B.U.S.S.*, vol. 1, No. 2, from the notebook of Dr. Walley, who lived at the neighbouring house, Mendip Lodge, when the cave was discovered in January, 1797.

'As two young men were chasing a rabbit in Burrington Coombe, the little animal took refuge in the crevice of a rock; the lads, not willing to give up the object of their pursuit, procured a pickaxe with which they attempted to enlarge the entrance of the retreat, when a considerable portion of the stone gave way and discovered to their astonishment a cavern of considerable extent. As a very great collection of human bones were found in different parts of the cave, it became a subject of curiosity and was visited for many months by persons of every description.'

All the early accounts mention fifty skeletons found in the cave, but, alas, these have now vanished. Rutter says that the skeletons were surrounded with black mould, with the heads under the north wall and the feet towards the centre.<sup>1</sup> There is a tradition that the bones went to the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, but only one skull among all the number is known to be there now.

Many archaeologists have dug in this cave since 1797, some of the most notable being Buckland, Beard, Williams, and Boyd Dawkins. However, they left the most important finds to be brought to light by the unwearying labours of the Bristol University Spelaeological Society, from whose reports this description is compiled.

The cave contains two chambers. The outer one extends from the road to the spot where the walls come close together and form a neck or constriction, with the inner chamber, containing a shaft, beyond. The cave ends with a choke of gravel. It is easy to enter from the road, and formerly the floor was fairly level save for Boyd Dawkins's shaft in the inner chamber; but as the result of the steady excavations of the Spelaeologists since 1919, the original stalagmite floor together with the earth below it has been removed foot by foot, until bedrock has been reached in most places, and the visitor has to proceed warily, specially in the gloom of the inner chamber.

<sup>1</sup> Rutter, *Delineations of North-West Somerset*, p. 117.

The work of excavating was seriously impeded by the wilful destruction wrought by trippers on the simple apparatus, tripod, winch and wire rope, that was kept permanently in the cave. Finally permission was granted by the Lord of the Manor and the commoners of Burrington for a gate to be fixed at the entrance. As there is nothing either beautiful or interesting to be seen in the cave itself, no one is the worse for this, and the work can now proceed uninterrupted. Every scrap of the tons of earth taken from the cave was raised or carried in buckets, and sorted at the entrance, in daylight. No paid labour has been used at all.

In 1914, the Bristol Spelaeological Research Society began work and found important skulls, but no account of their discoveries was published for obvious reasons, and it was not until 1919 that the Bristol University Spelaeological Society began work in the cave.

Numerous flint implements were found, mostly with a heavy white patination. Their average length is 2 to 3 inches, and in type they are Magdalenian, or perhaps Cresswellian. At any rate they belong to the late part of the Palaeolithic period. Generally speaking, they are rather later than the far larger series, larger both in number and average size, from Cheddar. Some of the best may be described as battered-back knives. There are also points and scrapers. The men at Aveline's seem to have been rather short of flint. Few cores were found. More interesting, and far more rare in England than the flints, is the harpoon, made from the antler of a giant form of red deer.<sup>1</sup> This is about 4 inches long, and bears three barbs on each side, arranged alternately. Along the length of the harpoon and on the upper surface of the barbs are incised lines, probably decorative in intent. There is a faint trace of a bulb left at the base by means of which it was attached to its shaft.

Harpoons are very common in Magdalenian deposits in France, but in England specimens have only been found in Kent's Cavern, Torquay, and in Derbyshire.

<sup>1</sup> *B.U.S.S.*, vol. 1, No. 2, fig. 10 (see Frontispiece).

They are used by the Eskimo to-day for fishing, and sometimes have a loop in the base through which a cord can be tied to attach the harpoon to its shaft, and prevent its loss. The great French authority, Abbé Breuil, has ascribed this weapon to the very end of the Magdalenian period. It is quite possible that it may have been manufactured in France, and brought to Burrington by some travellers, or again it may have been bartered from hand to hand and thus have arrived by slow stages ; we cannot tell.

. Perhaps the most attractive of all the finds from this cave is the collection of about 60 shells (*Neritoides obtusatus*, Linn.) all with the umbo pierced to form a necklace (see frontispiece). The cord had, of course, completely disappeared. These shells belong to a sea-creature, and in the fresh condition have a wonderful variety of colours, and must have made an attractive ornament. Necklaces made of South Sea shells are common to-day and make a significant link with the past. Shells and bones pierced for necklaces are found in the French and Italian Palaeolithic sites. Several teeth of deer and horse were also found in Aveline's Hole, pierced or notched for suspension as part of a necklace which was further elaborated by at least one drilled bone. There was nothing corresponding to the manufactured bone beads worn by the French cave-dwellers of the time.

These cave-dwellers must have turned their attention to matters other than the supply of the bare necessities of life, for in the cave were seven fragments of fossil ammonite body cases, and a scrap of Portland screw fossil. These must have been brought from a considerable distance and may have been considered as charms or playthings or ornaments. This habit of collecting fossil shells was also a common one in Palaeolithic times.

The animal bones were numerous, and included the species found at Cheddar, as well as the remains of numerous rodents and birds, among which ptarmigan was abundant. The fauna denoted a cooler climate than had prevailed at the opening stages of the Upper Palaeolithic times.

The conditions in Aveline's probably mark the maxima in this cooling. It is likely that the upper portion of the deposits at Walton and Brean Down are contemporary with Aveline's. The characteristics of the human remains from Cheddar and Burrington form the most important aspect of the archaeology of the sites, for authentic human remains of the Palaeolithic period are extremely rare in

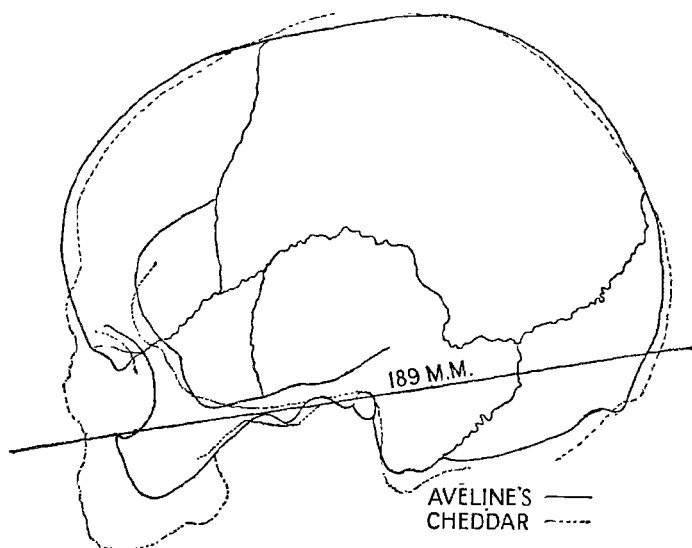


FIG. 3.—OUTLINES OF SKULLS FROM AVELINE'S HOLE, BURRINGTON, AND GOUGH'S CAVE, CHEDDAR

England, and their discovery at these sites, well buried under a stalagmite floor with contemporary fauna and artifacts, leaves their identity in no possible doubt.<sup>1</sup> The Cheddar Man is known from his limb bones to have been rather short, about 5 feet 4½ inches in stature, and to have been of slender build. From the facets on the leg bones we may infer that he was accustomed to squatting, the

<sup>1</sup> *Journal Royal Anthropological Inst.*, XLIV, p. 241, C. E. Seligman and F. G. Parsons.

usual primitive fashion of resting. The skull is long, or dolichocephalic, the index of the relative proportion of length to breadth being 70·4. Yet the face, taken as a whole, is broad, so we have the anatomical anomaly of a long skull and broad face. This is also a marked characteristic of the skulls from Aveline's, and is a normal feature in many individuals of the Crô-Magnon race, the inhabitants of France in these times. The most complete of the Burrington skulls is probably female, and devoid of the well-marked brow ridges of the Cheddar man. This to a great extent accounts for the apparent difference between them, for when it comes to actual measurements, they agree very well. However, some of the other fragments of skulls from Aveline's are interesting, because they appear to be brachycephalic, or broad-headed, and this is the earliest recorded appearance of broad-headed people in England. During the more recent excavations at Gough's Cave, Cheddar, fragments of five more human crania have been found, which Sir Arthur Keith describes as 'representative of a long-headed type allied to, but with crania not so capacious or so massive as those of the Crô-Magnon people. This difference in head-form does not indicate a real racial difference'.<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting also to note that some, at any rate, of the Burrington people had been deliberately buried; the bones of one baby's skull were lapped one within the other in a way that could not have been accidental.

The deposits from Aveline's carry us nearly to the end of the Palaeolithic period proper, but not quite. For the concluding period we must turn to Sun Hole, and Soldier's Hole, Chelms Coombe, Cheddar, and a number of caves in Ebbor Gorge, near Wells, and the top of the deposits at Walton and Brean Down. At Rowberrow, a cave on the north side of Mendip, about a mile from Aveline's, there are deposits of this date overlying a great depth of over 20 feet in some places, of barren material representing the earlier phase of the Palaeolithic.

The fauna in these caves is the same as at Aveline's

<sup>1</sup> Sir Arthur Keith, *Proc. S.A.S.*, LXXIV, pp. 118, 121.

and Cheddar; mammoth, woolly rhinoceros, hyaena, etcetera, have completely disappeared, but the most notable characteristic found in digging these deposits is their comparative barrenness both of animal bones and traces of man's presence.

To account for this absence of remains is not easy, for though theories can be advanced which meet the facts, theories they must remain in the present state of our knowledge.

It is possible that in the wake of the last retreat of the ice, forests sprang up and the hunting groups and the game they followed tended to become isolated in small areas. The colder-loving fauna followed the retreating ice, making way for forest forms. With the forests came an increasing rainfall, thus still further limiting the wanderings of the game and hunters.

Such climatic and floral changes would account for the paucity of remains in the deposits of the period, and the increase in the rainfall would be marked by an increase in the amount of stalagmite forming in a cave. It is therefore interesting to note that in the caves the Palaeolithic deposits end upwards with either a definite stalagmite floor or a layer of cave earth much impregnated and cemented with stalagmite, the difference depending on the local conditions.

It is certain that at this time the land was rising, and the rivers therefore cutting their way down to sea-level. This is illustrated by the raised beaches at Sand Bay, near Weston-super-Mare, Brean Down, and St. Audries,<sup>1</sup> where remains of Pleistocene date have been recovered between high- and low-water marks. Thus Somerset bears out the evidence from other areas of a general rise of land level round the southern part of England.

Only the most important sites have been dealt with in this chapter. The following places may be added to the sites of Pleistocene date already mentioned: Blagdon, Goatchurch, Nynhead, Churchill, Freshford, Kilve, Loxwood (near Bath), Plumley's Den, Burrington, Walton

<sup>1</sup> *V.C.H.*, I, p. 168.

Bone Cave, Foxe's Hole (Burrington), Bridged Pot Shelter (Ebbor), Dulcote, Wells, and Bleadon.

Without a doubt, in those early times the freedom of the south-west from ice and its comparatively genial climate made Somerset, as it is now, a desirable residential district.

### CHAPTER III

#### BEAKERS AND MEGALITHS

FOR many years it has been the custom of prehistoric archaeologists to proceed from the Palaeolithic to the Neolithic, or New Stone Age. The distinguishing characteristics of this period were the absence of metal, the use of polished stone implements, the practice of the art of building with big stones (megaliths), which were used to form circles, dolmens, and alignments; and the custom of burying the dead in long barrows, chambered or unchambered, as the case might be. This period was believed to have continued until the use of metal became generally known, and the alloy called bronze was discovered. Then flint was used less extensively, and an incoming people brought a new culture, and buried their dead in round barrows, conveniently matching their round, or brachycephalic skulls.

This sequence may hold good for many parts of the world, but in Somerset there is a gap, so far as our knowledge goes at present, between the end of the Palaeolithic period and the culture which followed, which may be described rather as the dawn of the Metal Age than as the true Neolithic. For this apparent gap there are good physical reasons.

In the first place, at the end of the Palaeolithic period, as has been already shown, deposits of soil and gravel were accumulated under rather moist conditions, accompanying the retreat of the ice and the subsequent growth of forests; therefore the remnants of the hunting peoples, possibly isolated into small groups by forest, may have abandoned the caves for the drier, more open hill-tops, the sea-shore, and the banks of water-courses. If so, their living sites



have still to be discovered, unless the pygmy flints from the top of Mendip represent them. But caution is here necessary, since pygmies were undoubtedly used as late as the middle of the Bronze Age, and in the absence of certain types we cannot be certain that those found are really early.

Secondly, at the close of the Palaeolithic Age the land-level was considerably higher than it is to-day, and we know from other areas that the folk of the transitional period frequented the shores of rivers, lakes, and seas, whence they could easily obtain the shell-fish which formed a great part of their unappetizing diet. Therefore the subsequent submergence of the land, when England was finally divided from both the Continent and Ireland, has very probably destroyed the evidence of their occupation, and so left a blank in our record. There is ample evidence in this district to support this hypothesis, for we know that until quite late on in the Bronze Age the sea-level was below that of the present day. This is well shown in Somerset with its submerged forest near St. Audries and Minehead, where Bronze Age finds have been picked up well below high-water mark. Again, on the shore at Clevedon excavations for the retaining wall of the new marine lake revealed an old land surface under the present beach. On this surface were scattered parts of broken flint implements and chips, together with a datable object, namely, a polished flint axe. Therefore this area must still have been land at the dawn of the Megalithic Age.

A similar discovery was made when digging was in progress for the formation of the marine lake at Portishead. Dredging for the docks at Avonmouth also brought to light a bronze spear-head and a skull. Further, on the banks of the Bristol Avon between the mouth of the Trym and Penpole Point, there used to be exposed traces of a settlement which yielded pottery and polished stone implements. This is now covered with mud.

On the south side of Brean Down near the Pleistocene deposit there is a thin layer of genuine Kitchen Midden material, and here again Beaker pottery has been dis-

covered with shells and fish vertebrae, though there is a Bronze Age barrow at the edge of the cliff at Brean which may be responsible for the sherd.

The same story is told by the caves, where, generally speaking, the deposits are sufficiently stratified to form chronological evidence; and it is from the caves that the only exception comes.

At Chelms Coombe, Cheddar, there have been found fragments of sherds of two round-bottomed bowls described below. These seem to belong to the Windmill Hill type of pottery, excavated by Mr. A. Keiller, and alluded to by Dr. E. C. Curwen in *Antiquity*,<sup>1</sup> and said to be of pre-Beaker date (i.e. true Neolithic). They are more fully described later, but this type seem to be the only really Neolithic pottery so far discovered. Fragments of several pots of the same nature were also found in Sun Hole. The thinness of the deposit there may have accounted for the fact that they were lying with pieces of Beaker pottery.

With these exceptions, the caves show us Beaker pottery on the top of the Pleistocene rubble. Thus, at Sun Hole, Cheddar, lying on the top of stalagmited-Pleistocene rubbles is a hearth which has yielded flint implements, some fragments of polished axes, and pottery of the Beaker type, in association with sherds of round-bottomed bowls of the type usually found in this association. The same applies to Soldier's Hole at Cheddar, and to Bridged Pot, Ebbor.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore it seems clear that in many parts of Somerset the cultures of the Pleistocene deposits were not succeeded by epi-Palaeolithic and truly Neolithic cultures, but by the culture of the Beaker Folk, which is, in fact, the dawn of the Bronze Age. It is, of course, impossible to state categorically that Palaeolithic man lived on to witness the arrival of the Beaker Folk or that other races of men

<sup>1</sup> *Antiquity*, Dr. E. C. Curwen, vol. 4, pp. 24-5.

<sup>2</sup> Flint implements and fragments have been picked up on what has been described as a Neolithic dwelling site on Shapwick Hill, but in the absence of pottery this cannot be dated accurately.

did not inhabit the county after Palaeolithic man was gone and before the Beaker Folk men came ; but a review of the archaeological material at present available does emphatically suggest that after the close of the Palaeolithic period Somerset saw little or nothing of mankind until Great Britain stood at the threshold of the Bronze Age. It is true that to these new-comers metal was still a luxury, but it is important to remember that they were not strangers to the uses of copper and bronze, even though they were perhaps unable to work it for themselves and were not always able to attain it from others.

The gap between the deposits of the Pleistocene Age and the new period really does represent a tremendous step onwards in man's advance towards civilization. We left the Palaeolithic men as hunters, and we find that their successors are farmers. As Peake and Fleure have lately shown,<sup>1</sup> the requirements of a state of civilization are assured and plentiful food-stuffs, and the means of intercourse, which liberate initiative ; certainly these farmers had acquired from the East, by a route through central Europe or Spain, many of the inventions that have made life to-day what it is.

The Megalithic people had learnt to domesticate animals and to grow grain. Their food supply was now regular and real property was in existence. Therefore a far denser population could be maintained in any given territory ; and whereas a hunter needs to roam solitary or in small groups, the primitive farmer lives in communities for mutual protection and assistance. When this happens, specialists in different crafts will soon arise, and with specialization the need for exchange or barter. So the elements of modern society are forged. As we have already noted, the new culture includes the wholesale manufacture and use of pottery necessary for the storage of grain and water, and a useful auxiliary in cooking ; this material is invaluable archaeologically because of the practically indestructible quality of its sherds, and because it is generally made near the spot where it is used. The art

<sup>1</sup> Peake and Fleure, *The Way of the Sea*, p. 7.

of polishing stone was another important characteristic of this time, so much so, that the whole period is sometimes called the Axe Age, after the most prevalent polished implement; while the use of great stones and barrows of piled earth for public monuments and graves is not only important in helping us to trace the territorial limits of this culture, but also bears witness to a more advanced belief in life after death than that connoted by the primitive interments of the Palaeolithic period. The spinning and weaving of yarn to form textiles was another step forward, possible to a people with herds at their disposal, and it was only the everyday use of metal that was needed to make the world, in all essentials, that of yesterday.

Beakers are narrow, approximately bell-shaped vessels measuring about 6 to 8 inches in height, and usually decorated with horizontal bands of incised ornament, frequently of the chevron pattern; most of the British examples are made of a burnished but coarse brownish-red paste, often having a black core. They are found in many localities in Europe, and are generally associated with such objects as bracers, flint arrow-heads, and polished stone axes, or small copper daggers. It seems that they came to Britain from the Rhineland. They are found in both round and long barrows and with long and round skulls, but the Beaker people, those who were responsible for the introduction of beakers into this country, seem to have been round-headed. The date of their invasion and dominance has been conjectured with fair certainty to have been the first two or three centuries of the second millennium B.C. The Beaker complex in south-western England includes the Megalithic culture, which probably originated in the eastern Mediterranean and may perhaps have reached Britain by way of France. It may be that the humble monuments built in this style that abound in Britain are the native equivalents for the fine corbelled buildings set up farther east, for the best Megalithic building, like metal-working, is an art that is the outcome of long experiment and much experience, and cannot be acquired quickly.

Perhaps the simplest way to survey Somerset during this period will be to deal first with the beakers and other pottery, and then with the megaliths themselves.

In Somerset several beakers have been found in round barrows, usually in cists, and associated with either cremated or inhumed burials, or possibly with both together. At Culbone, near Porlock, in 1896, quarrymen found a rough enclosure of big stones, forming a cist of local grey slate. This was in the middle of the quarry face, and no barrow was visible above it. The cist was 3 feet 6 inches long, 22 inches wide, and 18 inches high. The floor was of thinner slate; the long axis was north by south, and the head of the crouched contained skeleton lay to the north-east. The beaker found within was  $6\frac{3}{4}$  inches high,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter,  $6\frac{3}{4}$  inches in circumference, and was hand-made. It belongs to Abercromby's type B.4. The skull was round with a cephalic index of 82. The whole find may now be seen in the Taunton Museum.<sup>1</sup>

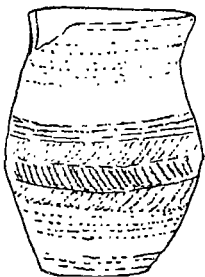


FIG. 4.—THE CULBONE  
BEAKER  
Height,  $6\frac{3}{4}$  inches

At Windmill quarry, Wincanton, a cist described as being like that at Culbone, was found in 1870, also in the course of quarrying operations. The brachycephalic skull and fragments of pottery were taken to Taunton. The beaker is one of the largest yet found in Great Britain. It belongs to Abercromby's type A.3. Pieces of a stag's horn and a flint scraper were found in the cist.

At Wick, Stogursey, there is a big round barrow known as the Pixie's Mound, and it is in an unusual situation. Instead of being on the high ground, it is on the levels which fringe Bridgwater Bay. A model of Wick barrow, conveniently bisected, can be seen in the Taunton Museum, and is of great value. It shows the barrow to have contained a covered circular walled enclosure. The central

<sup>1</sup> S.A.S., XLII (ii), pp. 56-66 (fig. 4, p. 60).

interment was excavated by the Romans, who left behind a coin and a mortarium. The diameter is 84 feet. The burials were by inhumation, and parts of three beakers were found. The skeletons had either been broken up, or the burials had been contracted. With two skeletons were finely worked knife-daggers. They are similar to four found in the turbaries west of Glastonbury, of early Bronze Age type, also in the Taunton Museum.<sup>1</sup> There are many local legends about the Wick barrow.

Far earlier was the discovery of the vault at Stoford, near Yeovil. This was found in 1826, and was hewn in solid rock and covered with a stone slab. The recess was 3 feet wide and 4 feet deep, and contained a human skeleton placed in a sitting posture with a drinking cup or beaker on one side, and a stag's horn on the other. Thus two of the Somerset cists contained deer horns with beakers. Near by, another vault was opened containing the skull of a horse, and also a third containing a quantity of human bones. The covers had been broken by the weight of the superincumbent earth. The beaker in this case was 6½ inches high, and may be seen at the County Museum.<sup>2</sup>

Phelps describes a similar burial on Brendon Hill at Treborough. There was a walled grave, measuring 7 feet 6 inches by 2 feet 6 inches. The sides were composed of dry walling. There was a skeleton in it. The bones were piously reburied in Treborough churchyard.<sup>3</sup>

The Bristol University Spelaeological Society began in 1922 to investigate the barrows on Blackdown, some of them quite close to the society's camp. These were very inconspicuous, specially in summer, when the bracken was tall, while numerous ant-hills had obscured their outline even if they were ever bare. The first barrow to be investigated was small and round, measuring only 25 feet in diameter, and contained a cist, the walls of which were made of sandstone, with one limestone slab. Its

<sup>1</sup> S.A.S., LIV (ii), pp. 1-67; XLVIII (i), pp. 82-3.

<sup>2</sup> S.A.S., XXXII (i), p. 14; IV (i), p. 8; LIV (ii), p. 67, note; LV (i), p. 90.

<sup>3</sup> Phelps, II, bk. III, p. 125.

dimensions were 3 feet 7 inches by 2 feet 3 inches, and its depth 1 foot. It contained fragments of a beaker, but no bones. However, there was one tiny fragment of burnt bone in the cist, though the primary interment was probably by inhumation. The beaker had evidently been broken before it was put in the cist, from the way in which one fragment was laid in another.<sup>1</sup> The beaker was of early date, according to Abercromby's classification. It is  $8\frac{1}{4}$  inches high and its greatest diameter is  $5\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

A neighbouring barrow also contained a cist but no pottery. The cist was filled with soil, in which were a couple of handfuls of calcined human bones. There was a scrap of polished flint implement in the barrow. In the British Museum is preserved a pottery fragment from a barrow at West Monkton Down. This is black and thin, and has been described by Mr. Reginald Smith as Neolithic. Arrow-heads were also found in this site.<sup>2</sup>

Yet another example of a cist comes from Williton, where, in a field with the suggestive name of Battlegore, are three barrows called Grabbarrows, said to contain several cells composed of flat stones containing human remains.<sup>3</sup>

In *Crania Britannica*, pages 244-5, Thurnam mentions a cist containing a human skull from Charlcombe, near Bath. The cephalic index was 73.6, so the skull was of the long-headed type; and is said to be preserved in the Bath Literary and Philosophical Society's Museum. Phelps also mentions a cist of huge stones on Dundry Hill, south of the church. This he illustrates, but no trace of it now remains.<sup>4</sup>

Thus there is a small group of cists and beakers on the west side of the county, with Yeovil on the south, and Wincanton on the south-east. When the Mendip examples are added, it appears that the Beaker Folk extended over most of the county.

<sup>1</sup> *B.U.S.S.*, vol. 2, pp. 65-8, 132.

<sup>2</sup> British Museum. Thurnam Collection, 1873.

<sup>3</sup> *S.A.S.*, VIII (ii), pp. 57-8; Collinson, III, p. 407.

<sup>4</sup> Phelps, II, bk. III, p. 77.

About a mile to the west of the Burrington barrows lies Rowberrow Cave. This was dug by the Spelaeological Society, and the top layers were found respectively to belong to the Modern, Medieval, Romano-British, and La Tène periods, but underneath were found fragments of beaker together with pygmy flints, a fragment of polished celt, and, perhaps the most important, pieces of a round-bottomed Neolithic bowl.<sup>1</sup> This was hand-made, with thin walls, only  $\frac{1}{16}$  of an inch thick. The paste was nearly black, of fine texture, and became very hard after drying. The height of the body was probably about 3 inches,

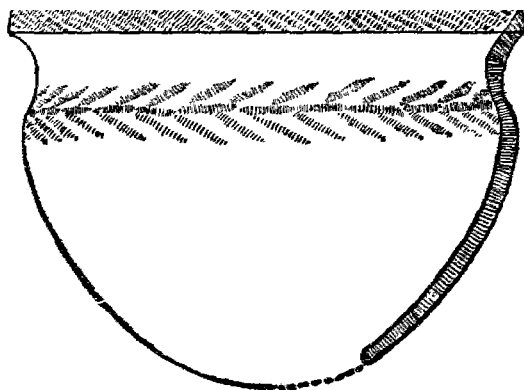


FIG. 5.—BOWL FROM ROWBERROW CAVERN, MENDIP

Height, 3 inches

and the diameter of the rim about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The pot had an incipient overhanging rim. The decoration was of the typical maggot design, placed round the junction of the body and neck, and on the outer and inner-surfaces of the lip. It corresponds to the pottery of the Mortlake type. The associated beaker fragments were of a rather late type, and two bronze borers and a triangular bone bracer were associated with them. All can be seen in the Spelaeological Society's Museum. The association can be paralleled at West Kennett. One food vessel

<sup>1</sup> *B.U.S.S.*, vol. 2, pp. 190-209.



found in this series had carbonized material adhering to the interior, showing that this type of ware was used for domestic purposes, and not solely for cinerary use as has been supposed. Many flints of varying form and character were also found in this cave, notably an arrow-head of the swallow-wing type, with one barb broken.

At Sun Hole, Cheddar, the Spelaeological Society found a few sherds of typical beaker pottery, associated with part of a Neolithic round-bottomed bowl, and leaf-shaped and barbed arrow-heads together. These have been assigned to the period 2000 B.C. or perhaps rather earlier, and so fit in well with the rest of the beaker culture.<sup>1</sup>

In the upper layers of Bridged Pot Shelter, Ebbor, Mr. Balch found a sherd of what may well have been Beaker pottery. Below this, he came on a hoard of eleven flint implements that may have been assembled in this period, but were like the implements found from Grimes Graves flint mines in East Anglia.<sup>2</sup>

The Chelms Coombe Rock Shelter was excavated by a Committee working for the Somerset Archaeological Society in 1925-6. Chelms Coombe is one of the less-frequented spots on Mendip, and can be reached from the top of Mendip, or by taking a path from the bottom of Cheddar Gorge, nearly opposite to Gough's Cave. The Coombe runs roughly parallel to Cheddar Gorge, but to the west of it. The rock shelter is approached up a steep path and over a bank of scree. The pottery from the top layer was Medieval and Romano-British; from the second it was Early Iron Age, while at the third foot the excavators came upon fragments of a vessel ornamented with finger-tip decoration, of another ornamented with three rows of chevrons formed by the impression of two stout pieces of cord twisted together, two scraps of an ornamented beaker, and a piece of another vessel with a bevelled rim. This association is usual, and has been recognized as marking the beginning of the Bronze Age. In the fourth layer, under conditions which made it possible that they had slipped down from level three, were many

<sup>1</sup> *B.U.S.S.*, vol. 3, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> *Antiq. Jour.*, VIII, p. 198.

smashed fragments of true Neolithic pottery, associated with Beaker which may have slipped down. From these it has been found possible to reconstruct two round-bottomed bowls. One is 6 inches high and  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide at the lip, and has two unperforated bosses on opposite sides immediately above the wide part of the bowl. The other is  $6\frac{7}{8}$  inches high, with a diameter of  $12\frac{1}{2}$  inches.<sup>1</sup> These fine bowls are at present in the B.U.S.S. Museum. They were described by Dr. R. C. C. Clay, and have been said to correspond to the early or Windmill Hill type of Neolithic bowl.

Rather below the rock shelter, quarrying operations brought to light a rock tomb, evidently enlarged from a natural cavity in the rock until it was about a yard square and about the same height. In this tomb were human bones which Sir Arthur Keith has identified as belonging to five individuals. One male skull was practically complete, and was almost broad-headed, having an index of 79.5. The rest were long-headed, and had 'all the characteristics of the long-barrow people'. The folk who lived in the rock shelter apparently buried some of their dead near by, but no grave furniture has survived. This interesting cist is now quarried away.<sup>2</sup>

This, then, with the Brean Down fragment, concludes the account of the beakers so far found in Somerset. They evidently represent a transitional epoch, since they are associated with both cremation and inhumation.

Another interesting feature of the Megalithic Age is the polished stone implements. Throughout the Palaeolithic period, stone tools were made almost exclusively of flint or chert, and as the period advanced, as has already been shown, the implements tended to become smaller and more delicate. We know very little of how these were used, or whether they were hafted or not. The period ended with pygmy flint implements.

The discovery of polishing stone was made early in Egypt, and soon brought to a fine art. When it reached

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. S.A.S.*, LXXII, pp. 106-13.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 106-13.

the West it was valuable, for it made possible more elaborate carpentry, a matter of importance when the problems involved in building huts and boats arose. Fractured flint takes a wonderfully sharp edge, but it breaks easily, having the defects of its qualities ; and a more serviceable hatchet or axe was made by polishing to an edge stone of more solid a texture. At its very best stone has disadvantages for cutting and boring purposes compared with metal : for it is necessary to have a far greater thickness of material to support an edge which will survive hard blows given by it than is the case with metal. Numerous polished stone implements and fragments of them presumably made in this Megalithic period, from their company when found in stratified sites, have been picked up in the county, mostly on the high ground, as the accompanying map shows ; but it is probable that they have been buried in silt or beneath peat on the low ground. Some axes have a perforation made ready to receive a handle. In the earlier types the perforation is of the kind known as 'hour glass' ; that is, it has been made from each side so that the hole is generally constricted in the middle. These perforated axe hammers have been found at Cameley, Clevedon, Dunster, Maxmills, Maesbury Camp, Monkton Farley Down, Luccombe, West Lydford, Pitminster and Wookey. Some of these are made of flint, and some of other stone.

Another change from the Palaeolithic to Megalithic times is marked by the greater variety in the flint implements, and the improved technique displayed in their manufacture, apart from the art of polishing. The best examples of this wonderful chipping are seen in the Scandinavian countries, but very fine knives were found in the turbaries and in Wick barrow, and may, as far as the evidence of the flint goes, have been imported from the flint mines of East Anglia ; while a great variety of scrapers, knives, polishers, and even saws are found on the surface, in barrows and habitation sites and in caves. It is not easy to tell the implements of the Megalithic from those of the full Bronze Age, for in spite of the advantages of

metal, flint tools were used even down to Roman times. A new form of flint weapon that appears only after Palaeolithic times is the arrow-head. Epi-Palaeolithic, or early Neolithic man seems to have used bows and arrows in eastern Spain, for they are depicted in the hands of the hunters of the Capsian wall paintings, but in England arrow-heads have never been found in Pleistocene deposits.

The arrow-heads are of many types, leaf-shaped, lozenge-shaped, single-barbed with a concave base, leaf-shaped with a tang, and barbed and tanged. Leaf- and lozenge-shaped arrow-heads seem to be found with any association, but the single barbed type comes earlier than the barbed and tanged, yet not in the earliest times.<sup>1</sup> In the caves there are more barbed and tanged than leaf-shaped arrow-heads. Flint points and tranchets of uncertain use are found, and scrapers are plentiful. End-scrapers are rare, though the typical Palaeolithic type may be found in some round barrows, and the side scrapers are straight, convex, concave, horseshoe-shaped, or notched. Knives are sometimes thick with a blunted back, and sometimes thin and scaled.

The typical type of borer is rare, but a type with a long handle-like projection, scaled all over, on a rough flake, is more usual. There are, of course, plenty of simple flakes, some cores, hammer stones, and so-called pot-boilers. Pygmies are mainly of the form of tiny elongated triangles; some have a straight blunt back, and some a notch. Some may be sickle flints, like those found at White Hawk Camp, and saws have been found, sometimes in round barrows.

As there is no natural flint in Somerset except by the rivers, it is easy to collect what worked flint there is, and arrow-heads and worked flints generally can more frequently be found on and near the hill-tops than in the valleys. Somerset is largely a pastoral country, and the area ploughed, specially on the hills, has decreased in late years, and this adds to the difficulties of the collector.

Owing to the wide distribution of worked flints, only

<sup>1</sup> *Antiquity*, vol. IV, No. 1, p. 26.

axes and parts of axes have been included in the distribution map for this period.

The most significant monuments of the Megalithic period are, after all, the megaliths themselves, and the long barrows.

It is no longer possible, if it ever was, to think in terms of British Archaeology. The similarity of the big stone monuments from the Eastern Mediterranean to Ireland force on us the idea that there was some cultural spread, though local differences also suggest that a national, if we may use the term so early, or at any rate a local and individual use was made of the idea in different districts. Here again Britain was on the edge of the culture drift, and very fine examples of such building are rare in our islands.

The distribution of megaliths suggests that their makers were used to travel by water ; and an important school of archaeologists believe that they were seeking, or at any rate interested in, metal. Nevertheless, little metal has been found in the long barrows, and that only silver and gold,

The long barrows are of two types, chambered and unchambered. It is not likely that many more chambered tumuli will come to light, but so many unchambered have been noted by the Spelaeological Society during the last ten years, that it is open to doubt if the map really represents the real distribution of the long barrows, or if a similar number will not be found on the Quantock, Brendon, Blackdown Hills, and Exmoor, when an equally exhaustive survey is made of them. Such unchambered barrows are not conspicuous, their elevation is often only about 3 feet, and they are only discovered when a survey of the ground, field by field, is undertaken.

The distribution map at present suggests very strongly that the folk who made the long barrows and erected the megaliths came to Somerset from the north-east, for not only are the majority in that part of the country, but Stoney Littleton is very much like Uley, Rodmarton and other chambered tumuli of Gloucestershire and Wiltshire.

Stoney Littleton, now a National Monument, lies near the village of Wellow, south-west of Bath, and is on the side of a hill, three-quarters of a mile south-west of Wellow Church. It was opened and described very carefully by Skinner in 1815, and he tells us that it was originally opened 50 years before, when the farmer carried away many cartloads of stones for the roads, and opened the side of the passage, whence the country people forthwith removed many of the bones from time to time. Skinner describes the tumulus as 107 feet long, 54 feet over the top, and 13 feet high. Its height had formerly been greater but had been reduced within living memory by removal of the earth and stones. It is a type of chambered tumulus known as a passage grave, and has a true opening on the south-west side. From this opening there extends into the tumulus a passage,  $47\frac{1}{2}$  feet long, from which three chambers open out on either side. The walls are built of large stones set on edge, with the intervals filled up with dry walling, and the roof is composed of stones roughly corbelled. The doorway is formed by a large stone resting on two others; this lintel stone is 7 feet long and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet wide, and the actual aperture is about 4 feet high. Skinner reported that he found a stone across the passage at one place, and suggested that some of the chambers might have been later additions to the original sepulchres. Both interments and cremations were found, but the cremations seem to have been the more recent. The whole barrow is now pear-shaped, with the greatest height at the broad, or south-west end. The entrance is recessed in the middle of this end, and from it the sides of the banks sweep away, held in place by a retaining wall built of dry walling which was discovered by Skinner and which has been repaired where necessary.<sup>1</sup> The monument is now railed in, and the key can be obtained at the farm about a quarter of a mile away. In wet weather the walk to the farm, and, indeed, to the barrow, is excessively muddy. The barrow is now covered with rough turf, but in spite of its inaccessibility,

<sup>1</sup> S.A.S., VIII (ii), pp. 46-9; V.C.H., I, p. 190.



INTERIOR OF ONE OF THE CHAMBERS OF STONY LITTLETON  
LONG BARROW





it is probably more worth a visit than any other Megalithic site in the county. Only parts of two of the skulls now remain, in the Bristol Museum, and they were described by Thurnam as being unusually flat in the forehead, but as conforming generally with those from Uley.<sup>1</sup>

These fragments of skull, kindly lent for examination by the Director of the Bristol Museum, are, unfortunately, scanty. They consist of two pieces of calvarium, one probably of a male, and one of a female, and rather more than half a mandible. As skulls from long barrows are not common, it is worth while to record the measurements that it is possible to make. In the case of the female the frontal bone and part of the parietals is present. The ophryonic width is 92 mm., the greatest frontal diameter at the external angular processes is 99 mm., so that the difference is 7 mm. There is a greater frontal eminence than in the male specimen, and the two eminences are joined by a slight convexity. This is frequently a feature of skulls of the Mediterranean race. Enough remains of the skull to make it clear that the individual was obviously long-headed. The coronal suture is closed in the lower part, so that the age was probably between 35 and 40 years. The thickness of the skull at the bregma is 7 mm.

The male fragment consists of the frontal bone. The ophryal diameter in this case is 94 mm., the biangular 103 mm., so that the difference is 9 mm. The length of the bone from nasion to bregma is 111 mm. The thickness at the bregma is 7 mm. The supra-temporal crests are well marked, and there is a prominent glabella. The bone is detached at the suture, and there is no sign of union with the parietal bone, so that the age of the individual was probably about 30 years. Enough remains of the mandible or lower jaw to observe that the chin was pointed, and that it may have belonged to the male skull. The three right molars are present, and considerably worn, and there is one pre-molar.

<sup>1</sup> Thurnam, 1 Decad, *Crania Britannica*.

With these bones is a fragment of a left parietal bone from Fairy Toot, F 779.

From these data it seems possible to say that the race interred in the Somerset chambered tumuli was long-headed, and of the type usually called Mediterranean.

Perhaps it should be emphasized that none of the stones in this or any other Somerset Megalithic monument show any sign of having been dressed, and all the walling is dry, that is, constructed without the use of mortar, just as the walls bounding the fields are set up in the county to-day.

The next chambered tumulus is a quarter of a mile to the east of Butcombe Church, on the north side of Mendip, and near the village of Nempnett Thrubwell, from which it sometimes takes its name. It also lies on high ground, and when the writer went in search of it, the young man of the village who was at first asked as to its whereabouts knew nothing of its existence, but an elderly labourer pointed the way, and said that the fairies still lived in its underground chambers. The tumulus is called Fairy Toot. It was opened by a farmer in 1788, and described by the Reverend Thomas Bere, Rector of Butcombe, in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1789. He says that it was then considered to be the haunt of fairies, ghosts and goblins.

'It was 150 feet long from north to south, 76 feet from east to west, and its elevation was 40 feet, and oval in shape. It was almost wantonly destroyed, for the waywarden sent men to take away the stones for road mending, and they began the work of demolition at the south end. They came to a stone inclining west, and within was unmortared wall on the left, and, no doubt, once on the right-hand side. It was built of thin slabs of white lias, and was 14 inches thick and 4 feet high. Thirteen feet from the entrance a perforated stone appeared inclining to the north and shutting up the avenue between the unmortared walls. On the east side a cell presented itself, 2 feet 3 inches broad, 4 feet high, and 9 feet long from north to south. Here was found a perfect skeleton, the skull and teeth entire, the body having been deposited north and south. At the end of the first sepulchre the horizontal stones on the top had fallen down. There were two other catacombs, one on the right, and one on the left of the avenue, containing

several human skulls and other bones. A lateral excavation was made, and the central avenue was found to be continued. Three cells were here discernible, two on the west and one on the east. These had no bones in them. The whole tumulus was covered with a thin stratum of earth, and overgrown with trees and bushes.' <sup>1</sup>

Phelps, writing in 1835, says the remaining stones were used for lime. 'Sic transit.' To-day all that remains is a dilapidated mound, from which emerge a few big stones.

The perforated stone mentioned is important, for this looks like the porthole found in the French tombs near Paris, described by Mr. Kendrick in *The Axe Age*, page 39, and serves to connect the Somerset area with the French megaliths. Alas, all the other chambered tumuli are even more completely destroyed.

At Frome there seems to have been a chambered tumulus in the garden at Fromefield where in 1820 five skeletons were found, with pottery, a fragment of which is now in Taunton Museum. The bones were allowed to remain.<sup>2</sup>

A large tumulus can be seen in the park at Orchardleigh, near the picturesque village of Lullington, two or three miles north of Frome. The site of the tumulus is called the Mortuary field, or Murtrey Hill. Carriages and cars are not allowed to drive through the park, but the stones are near the drive, and can be reached on foot or on bicycles. The tumulus was described by Phelps as an oval tumulus 50 yards long by 35 yards broad. The two upright stones leant against one another and the larger measured 10½ feet by 6 feet by 3 feet. The site was excavated for the Somerset Archaeological Society by Mr. St. George Gray in 1920, but as only Roman artifacts were found it seems probable that it was opened and rifled by that enterprising people, and that the two stones now standing are not in their original position.

Another ruined chambered tumulus is in the parish of Holcombe, two miles south of Radstock, and is on Charmborough Hill, in a field called the Giant's Ground. It was

<sup>1</sup> S.A.S., VIII, pp. 54-5; Seyer, *Memoirs of Bristol*, vol. 1, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> S.A.S., LVIII (i), p. 108; LVII (i), p. 37.

explored in August, 1909, by the Reverend J. D. C. Wickham, B.A., Lord of the Manor of Holcombe. He describes the excavations as follows :

' Interesting remains were soon unearthed at a depth of only 2 feet. These remains consisted of several human skulls and bones lying closely packed together in groups, generally between vertical stones, and sometimes overlaid with slabs of stone. These were all found in one part of the mound, in close proximity to the large entrance stones, and at the base of the two which still stand, apparently in their original position, at the east entrance of the barrow. (The third stone, which had evidently once formed the cap-stone resting upon the other two, which were covered with earth, stood on its side further off.) Some of the skulls and bones were submitted to the inspection of the late lamented Dr. John Beddoe, whose report upon them is as follows: "These bones are those of several individuals, differing in age and sex; unfortunately they are all so much fractured that I cannot derive from them any certain or even fairly probable conclusions as to stature, head form, or race type. . . . On the whole, one may say that one man among the persons whose remains are here, and that one most likely the chief or principal, was a big, sturdy fellow; but of his stature one can say nothing." <sup>1</sup> The finds included two leaf-shaped flint arrow-heads and a scraper, and some evidence which suggested that the place was a flint workshop, because of the numerous very small chippings which abounded. A secondary interment of late Roman times was also discovered within the area of the tumulus, which might account for the scarcity of the funeral furniture in the barrow.' <sup>2</sup>

On Redhill, where the Bristol-Bridgwater road crosses the hill above Wrington, to the west of the road, there stands Cornerpool Farm, approached by a trackway, and behind the house lies the Waterstone Dolmen, a monument which consisted originally of three uprights, and a coverstone, now fallen into ruin. The most westerly upright is 7 feet long, 1 foot 4 inches thick, and tapers from 4 feet 2 inches to 9 inches at the apex, and now leans to the east. The eastern upright also leans to the east, and is 8 feet 8 inches long, with a breadth of from 2 feet 6 inches to 1 inch, while the thickness varies from 1 foot 10 inches to 1 foot in places. The third stone is probably

<sup>1</sup> *S.A.S.*, LVIII (i), p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> *Record by Spade and Terrier*, Wickham, pp. 1-5.

broken, and is 3 feet 7 inches long, 2 feet 3 inches broad, and 11 inches thick. The coverstone is large and irregular in shape, hollowed in its upper side, where the water collects and so gives the dolmen its name. It is 3 feet thick at the west side, and thins out unevenly, the north and south dimension is 10 feet 10 inches, and the east and west 9 feet 2 inches. Its bulk is just short of 100 cubic feet, and its weight about 6 to 7 tons. The uprights are of local rock and could be obtained within a few hundred yards of the site; they are of lias. The coverstone is of silicious breccia, probably of trias, rather like the rocks of the Stanton Drew circle, and probably came from the Harptree ridge of Mendip, a distance of six miles. This dolmen is six miles west by north of Stanton Drew, where, besides the stone circle, there is another dolmen.<sup>1</sup>

Not far from the west end of Stanton Drew Church there remain three stones called the Cove. The two side stones are still standing, but the third has fallen down. These three stones are 18 inches thick, and the respective lengths are from 10 to 14 feet. The Cove is 10 feet wide and about 8 feet deep, and opens to the south-east. It is distant 157 yards to the west of the first circle. It is considered by some archaeologists that this is all that remains of a chambered long barrow, and its position near the stone circles is very like the position of such barrows at Stonehenge and Avebury. No mound now remains.

Another single stone which may also have formed part of a dolmen is known as Hauteville's Quoit, and is just over a mile north-east of the middle of the big circle. It is a large stone, and writing in 1664, Aubrey gave its dimensions as 10 feet 6 inches by 6 feet 6 inches by 1 foot 10 inches; while a mile away are two stones known as the Tynings, in Middle Ham Field.<sup>2</sup>

At Druid Stoke, a suburb to the north of Bristol, between Stoke Bishop and Shirehampton, and just on

<sup>1</sup> *B.U.S.S.*, vol. 2, No. 3, p. 276; Professor Lloyd Morgan, *Clifton Antiq. Club*, III, pp. 192-4.

<sup>2</sup> *S.A.S.*, XXIII (ii), pp. 30-7.

the Gloucestershire side of the Avon, there is a house called the Cromlech, from the dolmen standing in its garden. Four stones are visible, largely overgrown with ivy. They consist of table stone number 1, number 2 leaning against number 1, number 3 in front of number 2, and almost buried, and number 4 adjoining 3. Number 5 is deeply buried in the middle of the rest. The stones are possibly from Henbury, close at hand. Seyer says that they come from Kingsweston, where many of smaller sizes were used by Mr. Tarr for the foundations of his house.<sup>1</sup>

Beckington is a village about two miles north-east of Frome, on the main road between Bath and Warminster. If the visitor leaves the village street by a small road leading to the east, he will in time come to a beautiful stone farm-house, Old Seymour Farm, said to have been the home of Jane Seymour, mother of Edward VI. On the land of this farm, at a distance of two fields from the road, is a clump of fir-trees growing on a long barrow, which is on slightly rising ground, overlooking the Wiltshire Downs. Its long axis is S.S.E. by N.N.W. There are 22 or 23 sarsens lying on the ground, with three or four at either end upright. One large flat one at the west end is 3 feet 7 inches high, 6 feet broad, 2 feet 3 inches thick. The stones are distributed over an oblong roughly 60 feet long, and their position suggests that they formed a long, narrow chamber, but they are badly overgrown with trees to-day.<sup>2</sup>

At the junction of the three counties of Somerset, Wilts and Gloucester, on the east side of the Fosseway, two miles north of Batheaston, there stand the Three Shire Stones. Three uprights support a cap-stone. These are obviously a modern erection, but they are mentioned by Stukeley in 1736, and it has been conjectured by Father Horne that they originally formed part of a monument in the neighbourhood, and that it was on account

<sup>1</sup> Seyer, I, p. 101; *Trans. Bristol and Gloucester Arch. Soc.*, XXXVI, p. 218, plate.

*Bath Field Club*, VII, p. 88; *New Bath Guide*, 1821, p. 40.

of this well-known landmark that the shire boundary was drawn at this special place.

These are the only certain remains of chambered tumuli so far recorded for Somerset, but a number of isolated stones remain, which may or may not have the same origin. There is one in a cottage garden in Armoury Square, in the middle of Bristol. This is mentioned by Seyer, who says it originally had a companion across the road, and was much larger than at present. It is made of Bath Freestone.<sup>1</sup>

On Redland Green on the hill which bounds Bristol on the north there is a large solitary stone which may be part of a monument, and is certainly of ancient date, as it was restored to its present and original position after having been removed, because its antiquity was recognized.

In the parish of Shipham on Mendip there is, near the Star Inn, a stone known locally as the Wimblestone. It is 5 feet high, by 5 feet 5 inches wide at the base, where it is 1 foot 5 inches thick. Close by are five other large pieces of conglomerate. In the same field are three other fairly large stones with a stony ridge leading up to them. People in the neighbourhood believe that there is treasure buried under the stone, and that at night it leaves its bed, and ranges up and down the county.<sup>2</sup>

Near Westonzoyland, on the moors south-east of Bridgwater, there is, or was,

'an ancient and curious stone of large dimensions, long known as the Devil's uping stock. There was a firm belief that it could not be moved, and that ploughs had been broken and tackle injured in the attempt. Finally Mr. Hitchings of Bridgwater purchased it and cut it up into chimney-pieces'.<sup>3</sup>

On Felton Hill, which is crossed by the Bristol-Bridgwater road, there is a very large flat stone, known locally as the Suck-stone, from the fact that water stands on

<sup>1</sup> Seyer, *Memoirs of Bristol*, 1825, vol. 1, p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> Knight, *Heart of Mendip*, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Stradling, *Priory of Chilton Polden*, pp. 75-9.

its upper surface in a natural hollow. Near by are a number of large stones, which by selection can be made to form a circle. They are, however, of the local limestone, and very probably natural outcrop. The fact that one stone bears a name is suggestive of antiquity, taken together with the presence near by of one long and two round barrows, but more cannot be said.<sup>1</sup>

Between Tarr Steps and Dulverton, just north of Ashway Farm, there is a standing stone about 2 feet 5 inches high by 2 feet 3 inches by 2 feet. About 60 yards north of it are two recumbent stones of about the same size, lying about 15 feet apart. These have apparently not been recorded hitherto.

Several long barrows which have not been excavated but are probably not chambered have been recorded. The one near the Suck-stone on Felton Common was being removed for road metal when it was discovered by Mr. Tratman, and was scheduled just in time to save it. There are two large round barrows not far off, and that part of the common is known locally as the Mountains. The barrow is oriented slightly east of north, looking north, and measures 58 feet in length, 46 feet and 40 feet in width at the south and north ends. The height is 4 feet, with the centre depressed. This is due either to disturbance, or the collapse of a burial chamber and gallery. At the north end two stones placed on edge at right angles may mark one of the chambers. A rounded stone near the first two and another flat stone placed on edge near the centre can be observed. There is no trace of a surrounding ditch.<sup>2</sup>

Not very far from this is the Redhill long barrow. At a field's length from the main road, and on the west side of the road, there is a row of trees, which grow along the top of a much-flattened long barrow. This is oriented east and west, and is 154 feet long. The wider and higher end is at the east, the widths being 50 and 45 feet, and the heights 3 feet 5 inches and 3 feet. Some large stones are visible; there is no trace of a ditch. There

<sup>1</sup> *B.U.S.S.*, vol. 2, No. 3, p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 279.



appear to have been four chambers, probably entered from the sides of the tumulus.<sup>1</sup>

On the very top of Mendip the Spelaeological Society discovered the Priddy long barrow. A part was excavated, nothing was found but a black hearth, together with two or three human teeth, and flint. On the original turf level was a broad triangular pygmy, of a type generally considered to have survived from the transitional period.

At Chewton Mendip, on the south slope of the hill to the north of the village, is a long barrow, running roughly N.N.W. by S.S.E. and abutting on the west side of the road. The main part is about 96 feet long and 44 feet wide, and a further piece, now cut off but possibly formerly belonging to the main mass, is 42 feet long.

Other long barrows are at Chewton Edge, at Green Ore, both on Mendip above Wells, on Pen Hill also north-east of Wells, at Longwood, north-east of Cheddar, and near Otterford.

The Chewton specimen is about 90 feet long and 83 feet wide. It lies north-west by south-east, and is roughly pear-shaped. To the south-east there is a round barrow, depressed at the top.

In his account of Little Solisbury Camp Phelps remarks that opposite to the entrance to the Camp are some long barrows; and that flat stones placed edgewise were to be seen in the agger at the side of the Camp, but have gone to repair the roads. There is no trace now of these barrows, whatever they may have been.<sup>2</sup>

There remains yet one class of Megalithic monument that is perhaps the most important and interesting of all, the stone circle. Somerset is unusually rich in possessing three of these at different sites, while at Stanton Drew there are actually three separate circles associated together.

The most recently recorded circle lies on Exmoor, south of Porlock Church. It stands at an altitude of 1,360 feet. It consists of ten standing stones or broken-off stumps and eleven prostrate stones. Of these only six are on

<sup>1</sup> *B.U.S.S.*, vol. 2, p. 279.

<sup>2</sup> Phelps, II, bk. III, p. 103.

the periphery of the circle, whose diameter is 80 feet. The rest may have been removed and thrown outward. The stones are not large; the tallest is only 6 feet 3 inches long, and 2 feet 2 inches wide.<sup>1</sup> They are composed of sandstone which is probably local and resembles the Stonehenge altar stone.

The Withypool circle is also on Exmoor, nearly seven furlongs to the south-west of the bridge over the Barle at Withypool.<sup>2</sup> It is at an altitude of 1,250 feet above the sea. Thirty-seven stones are now standing, on a circle with a diameter of 119½ feet. The gaps in the circle were probably caused by the removal of the stones for building or some other purpose. This would not have been difficult, as they are only between one and two feet high. They were probably chosen originally from the locality, and are formed of pale-grey grit with flakes of white mica.

Stanton Drew is a quiet village near Pensford, about 6½ miles south by east of Bristol. The stones are in a low-lying meadow by the margin of which flows the small River Chew. They can be seen at any time by applying at the neighbouring cottage in the village street. None of the stones show any trace of tool-marks, and they were probably obtained from the surface of the Harptree ridge, where some of their fellows yet lie. They are mostly composed of dolomitic conglomerate, but a few are of sandstone or oolite. The stones are disposed into three circles, two avenues, the Cove, already described, Hauteville's Quoit, and two stones known as Lower Tynings in a meadow called Middle Ham. The circles are far less spectacular than the monuments of Stonehenge and Avebury, for many of the stones have been removed, and those remaining are not very large, averaging perhaps 5 or 6 feet in height.

The great circle still has 24 of its stones, with a diameter of 368 feet.<sup>3</sup> From it an avenue leads off to the north-east, more or less in the direction of the smallest circle,

<sup>1</sup> *S.A.S.*, LXXIV, pp. 71-6, 1928.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, LII (ii), pp. 42-50, 1912.

<sup>3</sup> Plan (fig 6).

composed of eight larger stones, with a diameter of only 97 feet. The distance from the centre of one circle to the centre of the other is 379 feet. From this small circle an avenue also extends towards the east.

The third circle is to the south-west of the great circle and its centre is 711 feet 6 inches from the centre of the great circle. It possesses 12 stones and its diameter is 145 feet. A line drawn through the centre of this and of the great circle would reach the large fallen megalith known as Hauteville's Quoit, about which there are many

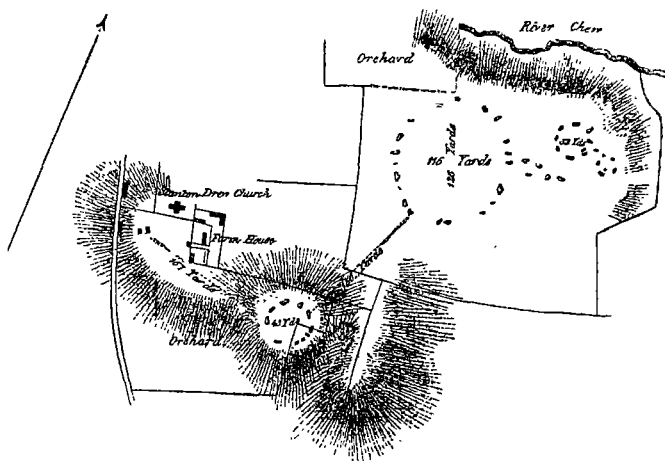


FIG. 6.—PLAN OF STANTON DREW CIRCLES

traditions, and which is a third of a mile away to the north-east. The two stones in the field known as Middle Ham are about a mile to the north-west. The Cove is about 341 feet to the west of the south-west circle.

Such are the Stanton Drew stones, but their interpretation has never been made clear. Some writers, Sir Norman Lockyer among them, believe that they were significant astronomically, and were used in a sun worship which took as its cardinal points the sun as it rises in the heavens in May and November, and not, as at Stonehenge, in

June and December. In this case Stanton Drew would have been erected before Stonehenge, and Sir Norman even suggests that the great circle was the oldest of the three, and its avenue was directed towards the May solstitial sunrise.<sup>1</sup> The Quoit may have been used as the foundation for a beacon which would guide the eyes of priest or worshipper towards Arcturus, which was used as a clock star. If the north-east circle was built later to give an alignment on the summer, June solstitial sun, then he could trace the change from the earlier to the later cycle as occurring about 1870 B.C.<sup>2</sup>

However, this contention is now discarded, but the consensus of opinion seems to be that the circles had some religious or social significance, particularly that they were burial mounds, and that it is very likely that they belong to the early part of the Bronze Age. All that we can do is to preserve the stones and to hope that analogy, or an increase of knowledge by some other means, may one day solve the mystery for us.

There seems to have been at least one more well-attested circle or series of circles in the county. No less a person than the Rev. H. M. Scarth, Rector of Bathwick, and a distinguished archaeologist, writing of Bathampton, remarks that in two of the enclosures near the Camp are the remains of stone circles similar to Stanton Drew. The larger stones were removed within living memory; and the smaller only remain. About thirty large stones were taken away. The enclosures were approached by an avenue of stones leading out of the Camp.<sup>3</sup>

However, in Mr. O. G. S. Crawford's account of Bathampton Down he mentions many traces of ancient cultivation, and the stones may have been the supports of field banks.<sup>4</sup>

On Tynning's Farm above Cheddar there is a large tumulus which has been partly destroyed and ploughed down.

<sup>1</sup> *Stonehenge and other British Stone Monuments*, Lockyer, p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> *S.A.S.*, XXIII (ii), p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> H. M. Scarth, *Journal Brit. Archaeol. Association*, 13, 1857, p. 105.

<sup>4</sup> *Wessex from the Air*, Crawford and Keiller, pp. 145-7.

' Slightly north-west of the centre is a large flat stone, while round the north-east-south-west sectors are arranged six large stones. Only the tips of these are showing, but one of them appears to be on its side, as 8 feet of it are visible along one surface. This is almost certainly a circle in the barrow.'

This certainly seems to be a Megalithic structure, and when it has been excavated by the B.U.S.S. there may be another type of monument to add to the list.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *B.U.S.S.*, vol. 3, p. 34.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE BRONZE AGE

THE Bronze Age is a disappointing period for the traveller, for the sites are, generally speaking, of little interest except to the excavator. It is true that when barrows are built close together as they are on Mendip, they suggest great activity at a far-off time; but an isolated barrow is often inconspicuous, or even invisible, except to the expert eye, and, unlike flints, bronze implements cannot often be found on the surface. Their discovery must generally be left to the chances of excavations which are made for other purposes. So the most important treasures of the Bronze Age must be sought for in museums, and both pottery and implements can be seen in the Taunton and Bristol Museums, and the Spelaeological Society's Museum at Bristol University. Many bronzes remain in private ownership, and much more recorded in the *Gazetteer* has been lost beyond hope of recovery. It is recorded, however, on the map (see *Bronze Age Map*, p. 68), and is of use in showing the distribution of the people who were responsible for leaving it.

In Western Europe, the Bronze Age is generally estimated to have lasted from about 2000 B.C. until the introduction of iron, which in England must have been about 500 B.C.

The Beaker people, with their round heads, probably intermarried with the long-headed natives, and the resulting folk were the inhabitants of Britain until the Kelts invaded the country possibly about 800 B.C., bringing with them their characteristic language and Late Bronze Age culture.

The Bronze Age was the first period, in Britain at any rate, in which we have a clear indication that men lived in such comparative security that they could indulge in the pride of life. We know that they were users of the horse, for some of their harness has survived, made on a magnificent scale, and horses are sometimes buried in the barrows with their masters.

We know something of the civilization of people using bronze in the East from the evidence we have, both literary and archaeological, of the times described by Homer, and from the story of the glories of Crete. Marking a tremendous advance on stone, bronze had yet not the qualities of iron, which when it was used freely, superseded bronze, and put an end to the bronze culture and gave us a world with less barbaric splendour, but more possibilities of advance.

Gold was used by these men, when it could be obtained, for personal adornment, and in the Lansdown Sun-disc (so called), in the Yeovil torque, in the ring of gold from Bridgwater and the Clevedon torque of later period, we have Somerset examples of the use of this metal. How much more there may have been that the ages before us have appropriated, we cannot tell.<sup>1</sup>

It is probable that it was the Megalithic people belonging to the early Bronze Age who built Stonehenge, Avebury and Stanton Drew, and tribes which could use such immense monuments must have developed corporate life to a considerable extent.

From the time of the Beaker people until the close of the second millennium B.C., there was probably no further invasion of Britain. But about the year 1000 B.C. or rather later, the unrest on the Continent resulted in the arrival in Britain of the first Kelts to cross the Channel. These invaders were in the last stage of the European

<sup>1</sup> In the close rolls for the twenty-first year of Henry IV (1236), we read: 'The Earl of Cornwall sent to the Isle of Wight to look into the digging for treasure.' From Roman times onwards, barrows were recognized as a possibly fruitful source of revenue. This is shown by the coins of Roman and Saxon times that we have found in our barrows.

Bronze Age, still using leaf-shaped swords and socketed axes. It is possible that they were Goidels, but if so they did not make a long stay in this country, which has no definitely Goidelic place-names, but passed on to Ireland. They were succeeded by, or possibly, were contemporary with, an invading folk bearing the Lausitz culture, including the bucket and globular urns with finger-tip ornament that we get in the Deveril-Rimbury group of urns. The Deveril folk buried their dead in existing barrows or flat cemeteries, and were responsible for many of the secondary interments found in the round barrows.

It is difficult to divide up the Bronze Age accurately in any district, and Dr. C. Fox has found the following to be true for the Cambridge region. But in the West the last phase is less well differentiated. The invaders had become mixed with the natives and palstaves are found together with socketed axes.

I. 2000-1700 B.C., Transitional period, Beaker interments, flat axes and daggers.

II. 1700-1400 B.C., Early Bronze period, bi-conical urns, Abercromby, type 1. Flat and flanged axes, daggers.

III. 1400-1000 B.C., Middle Bronze. Bi-conical urns, Abercromby, type 3-5. Palstaves, torques, rapiers.

IV. 1000 or 800-500 B.C., Deveril-Rimbury pottery, socketed axes, swords.

The Bronze Age is usually thought to begin at the Beaker period, but as the transitional time has been already dealt with, it is possible now to consider the full Bronze Age. This is represented by the finds from excavations in round barrows, by isolated finds of bronze implements, and by hoards, but authenticated living-sites have not yet been discovered in this district.

The distribution map of the Bronze Age is interesting. With a few exceptions, the barrows recorded lie on the high ground, but this is by no means the case with the finds of implements. The plain between the Mendip, Quantock and Blackdown Hills is well covered with finds, thus affording an interesting contrast to the distribution map of Megalithic times. Isolated implements in alluvial



soil may have been dropped into the water, but undoubtedly the chief living-sites were between the hills and the marsh, even if the existing lowland was not then high enough for occupation.

According to C. E. P. Brooks, *Evolution of Climate*, at about 1800 B.C., Britain subsided until she had reached approximately her present level. The climate was deteriorating, becoming humid and rainy, with, as a consequence, the set in of intense peat formation. This has been called the peat-bog period, or Upper Turbarian, and may account for the numerous discoveries of bronze implements in the Somerset peat.

The most important hoards belong to this low-lying district, notably those at Stogursey and Edington on Polden, with the finds from the Glastonbury turbaries, while the hoards near Taunton also come from low-lying country. The hoard from West Buckland, south of Taunton, is off the plain but not on the hills. That from Compton Martin, again below the hills, seems to have consisted of palstaves, but it was scattered as worthless by its finder. This only leaves the Monkswood Hoard, found near St. Catherine's, north of Bath, and just over the county border, on comparatively high ground, and causes us to think that the people of the later Bronze Age, at any rate, lived to a great extent on the low ground. Much of the low land must have been flooded since Bronze Age times and so evidences of occupation may have been buried in silt, or obliterated by agriculture on the fertile ground. The Edington and Glastonbury finds lay beneath a thick layer of peat. It is impossible to know whether these hoards were buried or abandoned near to their owner's habitation, or far from the haunts of man. The latter seems unlikely, for 'where his treasure is, there will his heart be also', and with the need for subsequent identification of his site in mind, it seems unlikely that the hoarder would choose a spot far from familiar landmarks, though an upset canoe might account for finds in a marsh and a traveller might lose his possessions anywhere.

In comparatively recent times, agriculture has obliterated

ated, and no doubt still is obliterating, barrows; thus Rutter, page 181, says:

'A continuous flat, called Cheddar Moor, was, until within these few years, studded over with British barrows or tumuli, but the plough and harrow have entirely levelled them with the surrounding land, and every vestige of these ancient places of sepulture is entirely obliterated by enclosure and agriculture.'<sup>1</sup>

Skinner also remarks that at Snarescombe, a hamlet in Camerton Park, there was formerly a common of 200 acres. It was enclosed probably early in the nineteenth century, and many barrows removed by cultivation.

The *Victoria County History* mentions a barrow still remaining at Panborough, near Theale, to show that interments in barrows were made in the flat land.<sup>2</sup> There is naturally no proof that these barrows belonged to the Bronze Age, but though Somerset has those made by Hallstatt people, it has few of Roman and Saxon date.

Abundant as barrows are on most of the high ground of Somerset, they are more conspicuous on Mendip than anywhere else. Here they may be seen in clusters or singly, and are, in some cases, large enough to stand out against the sky-line when seen from a considerable distance. They are bowl-shaped, or bell-shaped. Of the disc, or ring variety, there are no proven examples on Mendip. The large ring earthwork, Gorsey Bigbury, will be considered later. It is certainly not a typical example of a disc-barrow. The burials in barrows may be in cists, or pits, and be above or below the old soil-level.

On the Quantocks and Exmoor, the barrows are also plentiful, but are less conspicuous. Whether this is due to difference in their structure, or to the varied effects of weathering on limestone and sandstone, it is not possible to determine as yet.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rutter, pp. 182 and 88.

<sup>2</sup> *V.C.H.*, vol. I, p. 182; *S.A.S.*, vol. XI (ii), p. 185.

<sup>3</sup> Lists of barrows can be seen in the *V.C.H.*, II, pp. 531-2, in the *B.U.S.S.*, vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 31-2, and others in the list of Ancient Monuments in the County scheduled under the Ancient Monuments Act, 1913, made by the Very Rev. Father Ethelbert Horne in *S.A.S.*, LXXV, pp. 94-7.

The interments in barrows may be inhumations or cremations. They may be in a cist, a pit, an urn, and above or below the old turf-level. Before considering the pottery that barrows often contain, it will be as well to note some of the rather unusual forms of barrows that occur in the county.

A barrow excavated by the B.U.S.S. on Mendip, near the Hunt Kennels (T. 1a), was of a simple bowl type, and instead of a cist, it contained a cavity lined with unbaked grey clay, into which had been introduced ashes, calcined bones, and charcoal.

A certain number of barrows are interesting because they appear to have had a Megalithic element in their construction.

Thus on Mendip Beacon a tumulus 12 feet high stood in the middle of the camp. On it was an upright stone described variously as 6 or 12 feet high.<sup>1</sup> Skinner also said that a large tumulus on Buckland Down, Buckland Dinham, had 'three stele or upright stones placed so as to form a triangle as high as a man on horseback, and they were broken up for road-metal'.

Some barrows have, or had; a peristalith of large stones in them; such is a barrow on Tynning's Farm near the Cheddar Track, while a circle of upright stones inside the barrow was also discovered at Willett, in the field called Sparkborough, in which there was a circle of upright stones inside, 6 feet in diameter and 3 feet high. An urn was in a cavity inside this barrow.<sup>2</sup> Such, again, is one of the circle of barrows at Beacon Batch, Blackdown. It has been removed almost completely, but two large stones remain, resting on the original surface, near its periphery, and about equidistant from it.

Skinner describes the Camerton tumulus, which produced an incense cup, as having a passage in it, 15 feet long, as well as a cist. This tumulus was said to have been made entirely of stones. In Brittany such tumuli are called 'galgals'.

<sup>1</sup> Phelps, vol. II, bk. III, pp. 105-6.

<sup>2</sup> S.A.S., XXIX (i), p. 46; Abercromby, pl. XCIV, No. 464.

The tumulus on the Brendon Hills 'just above the Tone, near the ford called Washbattle', is described as being 181 feet in circumference, 'with the customary circle of stones round the barrow inside, 1 foot wide, and 2 feet high. A peristalith inside the barrow surrounded a circle of 10 feet in diameter'. In the centre was a hole which contained no human remains. A neighbouring barrow was of the same construction, also with a perfect stone circle and dry walling. The primary interment was represented by a heap of burnt bones; 2 feet above this was an inverted urn on a tile, containing fragments of bone, including a piece of skull. A later interment in the same barrow was associated with a sword, now lost.<sup>1</sup>

In a description of the twin barrows at Northay, we read that

'In the further barrow they discovered a well-marked peristalith or outside rim of stones, with a large rock set up on the east side; and on the west, a small cist or vault, in which, however, nothing but a few ashes were discovered. There was a deep, unburnt interment in this barrow. Round the rock on the east side had been grouped a great number of sepulchral urns, inverted, and standing on square tiles of clay. These had fallen to pieces, but their imprint remained.'<sup>2</sup>

On Bathampton Down a tumulus was dug by the Bath Branch of the Somerset Archaeological Society in 1905, and it was discovered that a circle of stones had been laid at a distance of 22 feet from the centre of the mound. It was surmised that 'these were probably laid all round to support the earth when it was thrown up'. Fragments of black pottery, associated with charcoal and burnt bones, a sherd of red pottery and flints were found in the same tumulus, which had probably been disturbed before.<sup>3</sup>

On Lansdown, of Fair Field barrow No. 10 we read that it was 5 feet high, 38 feet in diameter, composed mainly of stones, with a circle of stones round the mound. Bones were found in a grave cut in the rock in the

<sup>1</sup> S.A.S., XLII (ii), p. 22.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, XXVIII (i), p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> Bath Branch, 1905, pp. 51-4.

centre. They were all human, mainly legs and feet. There were no traces of jaws or skulls. Urns were found in a secondary interment.<sup>1</sup>

The barrows on Lansdown have been extensively excavated, and an account of their contents can be found in the various volumes of the Bath branch of the Somerset Archaeological Society.

There remains a whole mass of written evidence and scraps of pottery in the museums that relate to excavated barrows and urns, but the descriptions are not full enough to make it possible to determine the period of the interment. All contained ashes or burnt bones. Some have exceptional features.

At Locking, near Weston-super-Mare, a barrow is described as 100 feet diameter and 8 feet high, containing a small subterranean chamber 9 feet square, with steps leading down to it. It contained an urn with bones.<sup>2</sup>

The Gristhorpe tumulus at Sigwell is interesting because it contained two burials and no urn. The bones are said to have been picked out of the pyre and laid apart, one set in a bark coffin, and one set unenclosed. A bronze blade, with two rivets and a bone handle, was found with the coffin. The place of cremation was found at some distance, for no charcoal was with the bones. The stakes which supported the pyre are said to have been still in the ground.<sup>3</sup>

There was a large tumulus on Worlebury Hill known as Pickwinner Cairn, or Peak Winnard. It was a cairn of stones on the top of a hill, 'made of loose stones in the form of a bowl barrow, very low'. Dymond excavated under it to the depth of a foot, and only found two bits of bone and three limpet shells. The fishermen used to throw stones on it for luck, saying,

' Picwinner, picwinner,  
Pick me some dinner.'

This sounds like a tumulus of later than Bronze Age date.

<sup>1</sup> S.A.S., Bath Branch, 1908, p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> Knight, *Sea-board of Mendip*, p. 384.

<sup>3</sup> S.A.S., XXIV (ii), pp. 75-83.

There is an interesting group of barrows at Tynning's Farm, on Mendip. They are placed in a meadow to the south of the farm, which itself lies on the track across Blackdown between Burrington and Cheddar.

It will perhaps be simplest to consider them all together, in spite of the fact that they do not form a homogeneous group, for as in some cases the primary and secondary interments are of widely different dates, it is not easy to deal with them chronologically.

North Barrow, Tynning's Farm (T. 10), is a bowl-shaped mound of loam, with a cap of stones and loam added at a later date with the secondary interments, so making a bell-shaped mound. The primary interment was only found in 1930 when the B.U.S.S. completed the excavation of the barrow. It was of slightly later than Beaker date, and consisted of a cremation placed in a cist in the rock  $22\frac{1}{2}$  feet from the centre of the barrow, roofed by a vault of overlapping stones, accompanied by pieces of burnt flint and three pygmy cups and small shells. Two other cists contained no burials.

The first cup was of an average height of 1.9 inches with a diameter of 3 inches. It was composed of beaker-like paste and decoration, with a rounded bottom marked off only externally from the walls. The body was a truncated cone separated by a moulding from the vertical concave neck. The rim was flattened and expanded by pinching out the inner lip. It was decorated with punctate chevrons, covering the base and body (excepting a narrow plain zone, and the moulding). It had oblique lines on the neck and radial lines on the rim; all these lines were produced by a convex comb with seven or more teeth.

The second cup was of the average height of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches and the diameter  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches. It was a thick, round-bottomed vertical-walled cup, with a hemispherical cavity, and the upper surface of the lip flat. The wall was perforated while the clay was soft, from within outwards by two small holes. Its decoration consisted of circles in pseudo-cord pattern, made up of independent narrow

fusiform impressions. Intervals between the circles were sometimes shaded by oblique impressions. The decoration affected the base, walls, and rim. The paste was soft, yellow, and grey externally.

The third was of an average height of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches and the diameter  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches. It was a thick bi-conical vessel with a flat bottom with a rounded cavity. The two cones were concave in profile and separated by a prominent angle. The rim was expanded by pinching out the lips. Two small holes perforated the angle, made both from the outside and from the inside. The paste was probably like number 2. The decoration consisted of a single row of chevrons impressed on the flat upper surface of the rim.

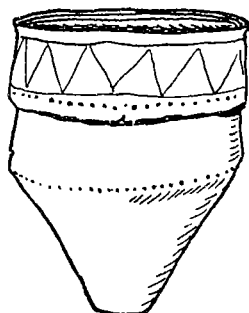
The secondary interments consisted of two cremations, possibly of a male and female, in urns. They were similar, both bi-conical, but with a degenerate angle, and tending to the bucket form, specially the later of the two (see B, fig. 7). They each contained a cremation, and were erect. The earlier has a row of thumb-marks at the angle, and a simple rounded lip. The later has a bevelled lip decorated with nail-marks, and a degenerate angle. A pavement surrounded the mouth of the first before it was disturbed, and each was covered by a stone slab. This must have been the work of the latest phase of the Bronze Age, when the invaders had influenced the native practice.

In the primary mound was a piece of a narrow overhanging rim type of urn, and other sherds of similar ware, and about 300 pieces of flint. About 600 sherds and much flint was in the secondary part of the barrow. The sherds had thumb-nail incised and punctiform decoration. The worked flints from the primary barrow included some fragments of polished flint, a finely scaled sub-triangular knife, one or two saws, and four 'Tardenoisian' pygmy flints. From the secondary barrow came a bead of lignite or jet.

The South Barrow (T. 11) was bowl-shaped, and had a ditch beneath the barrow. It measured roughly 68 feet in diameter, and was from 5 feet high. The primary

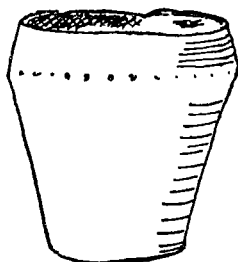
interment was found in July, 1930, below the original ground-level.

The interment was in a pit in the primary barrow. In the secondary part of the barrow was found a large



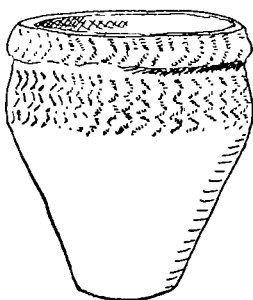
A

A.—Blackdown Barrow (T. 7)  
Height, 19½ inches



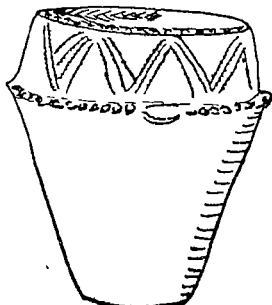
B

B.—North Barrow, Tynning's Farm (T.10)  
Height, 10 inches



C

C.—East Barrow, Tynning's Farm (T.12)  
Height, 12½ inches



D

D.—South Barrow, Tynning's Farm (T.11)  
Height, 16 inches

FIG. 7.—BRONZE AGE POTTERY FROM MENDIP BARROWS

bi-conical urn with a prominent rib at its angle, decorated with finger-marks and with four imperforate lugs. Its rim is also decorated with finger-marks, and it has a three-



or four-fold chevron in cord pattern between the rim and angle. It was inverted on a limestone slab, and contained a cremation. Some limestone slabs stood round it. Associated with the secondary interment were four small piles of stones: under one was a horse's skull, under another a horse's incisor and a flint knife, under another a flint saw, and under the fourth a flint scraper. There were again many flint implements in the mound (see D, fig. 7).

The East Barrow (T. 12) was much ploughed down, and has not yet been completely dug. A pit in the sub-soil under the barrow contained a cremation, and with it a thumb-scraper, perforated hone stone, and a polished pebble. A cremation was contained in an inverted urn of Type 1; beneath it were two jet beads and two thinner ones, two small disc beads and a triangular pendant with a central perforation, also made of jet. There was also a turquoise-blue tube of vitreous paste, the usual faience bead, fragments of green beads and a small bronze awl. The persons cremated were probably a young female and a child. The barrow was rich in flint implements (see C, fig. 7).

To the earlier Bronze Age group belongs an urn figured by Phelps, Volume II, page 124, from the Mendip Beacon barrow, No. 6.<sup>1</sup> It was inverted and in a rough cist, and the upper part appears to have been decorated with chevrons. A cinerary urn from Small Down, Evercreech, also belongs to Abercromby's type 1, as does one from Northay barrow, Whitestaunton; with this was found a triangular bronze dagger-blade with rivets. Other barrows that contained urns that may have belonged to this period of the Bronze Age are at Priddy, where, in the Lime-kiln barrow, a rude inverted urn was found, 16 inches in diameter, together with a flat bronze arrow-head.

In No. 1 of Priddy's nine barrows, a rude urn, broken, was in a small oval cist, covered with a flat stone. The same was true of barrows Nos. 3 and 6. The central barrow also produced a triangular arrow-head, hollow-

<sup>1</sup> Phelps, vol. II, bk. III, p. 124.

based, a lozenge-shaped arrow-head, and a flint knife, together with pottery which was also probably early.

At Rack Close, Tatworth, amber beads, and one blue glass bead and a piece of bronze were found inside a cinerary urn, and the same thing occurred in a barrow on the Brendons, near a ford called Washbottle. Part of a cinerary urn with the upper part covered with alternating chevrons and containing burnt bones, was found in the cemetery at Weston-super-Mare, while several urns of this type were found in barrows on Lansdown.

A food-vessel of an early type is at Taunton, labelled as coming from Somerset. It is figured by Abercromby, plate XXIX, No. 4.

Later in the series of these urns is one found by the B.U.S.S. on Blackdown, No. 3, T.7. The barrow contained a degenerate cist without cap-stones, and a large inverted collapsed urn of cordon pattern, made in 4 or 5 pieces, of the enlarged food-vessel type (see A, fig. 7). With it was a pygmy cup, made of much finer paste, but with no stone or grit in its composition. In this class may be put the secondary interment from Blackdown, barrow No. 1, which produced parts of two pots decorated with pot-hooks. It is of the overhanging-rim type, probably fairly late in Abercromby's series, coming between the end of type 1 and its derivative, type 5. On the Race Field, Lansdown Hill, barrow No. 6 was excavated in 1911, and an urn discovered with a cremation, which is thus described :

'The pot had a flat-topped overhanging rim and a collar about 1½ inches deep between the rim and shoulders. On top of the rim were small, punched, incised triangular decorations. There were about three punch-marks to an inch. Probably a row of finger-tip marks were placed below the rim.'

Somerset is particularly rich in pygmy, often called incense cups. These are quite tiny pots of uncertain use, buried in barrows. They are of various forms, but generally have perforated sides.

A rare and fine small pot was found at Camerton. The interment was cremated, and with the cup was a long

bronze pin with a hollow head, and a small whetstone with a hole in it. All can be seen in the Bristol Museum. The cup is of the pedestal-cup type generally found in Wiltshire, it is black in colour, and is ornamented outside and in with incised chevrons and triangles. It has two holes at the bottom.

From Priddy came an incense cup of the mammillary, or grape type. The small pot is covered all over with bosses. It was found with burnt bones in a hole 1 foot deep, covered with a flat stone. This contained five amber beads, part of a bronze spear or arrow-head, a bronze ring, and cup.<sup>1</sup>

An incense cup found at the Castle at Comfort, East Harptree, is at Taunton. It is under 2 inches in height, is bi-conical in shape, and has an everted lip. It was found with burnt bones.<sup>2</sup>

An incense cup was found at Northay barrow inside a big urn. It was small and filled with bones and ashes.<sup>3</sup> It was made of finer clay than its companion urn. It was 2½ inches high, with marked shoulders, and the upper part ornamented with oblique lines of punctures.

In barrow No. 3 (T. 7), Blackdown (see above), a pygmy vessel was again found with a big urn. It is of fine paste, and has no stone or grit in its composition. It is 2¼ inches high, and quite devoid of ornament. It is shaped like a flower-pot with no rim, and is slightly contracted at the top, thus forming a truncated egg-shaped vessel. The last incense cup is from Fair Field, Lansdown, and was found with a cinerary urn and a skull. It is decorated with a chevron pattern, probably of the late Beaker period. It is in the Bath Museum. The small cups found in T. 10, Tynning's Farm, already described in that group (see p. 74), are further examples of pygmy cups.

A certain number of barrows contained urns belonging to the Deveril-Rimbury type, believed to have been brought in by new peoples who reached England somewhere about

<sup>1</sup> Abercromby, pl. LXXIX, No. 219.

<sup>2</sup> Abercromby, pl. LXXX, No. 233.

<sup>3</sup> S.A.S., XXVIII, 1, p. 37.

900-800 B.C., and therefore representative of the very end of the Bronze Age, if not the beginning of the Iron Age. Their characteristic is that they are bucket-shaped, or barrel-shaped, or else globular, and are sometimes ornamented with finger-tip decoration. For the definition of the type see Hawkes, St. Catherine's Hill, p. 140 (*Proc. Hampshire Arch. Society*, vol. XI).

To this later culture belongs the urn found by the B.U.S.S. in the South Barrow, and those from the secondary interment in North Barrow also, Tynning's Farm, Mendip (see fig. 7, p. 76).

Rutter, page 330, notes that some rude urns were discovered on Beacon Hill near Maesbury Castle on which an attempted ornament had been made by indenting figures with the thumb-nail. Pottery decorated all over with thumb-nail marking was also discovered by Mr. Balch at Nettlebridge, with human bones belonging to three individuals. The jaws were of an unusual type, narrow and slim.<sup>1</sup>

At Bridgwater, an urn of the bucket type, with four false handles and incised dots at the top, was found, and is at Taunton, while another of the globular type, with lugs and no other ornament, was found at Chard, together with a small piece of bronze and a necklace.

An urn classed by Abercromby as miscellaneous but late, came from Willett, near Elworthy. It was 9½ inches high, and its largest circumference was 23½ inches. A fragment of an urn, now at Taunton, from Evercreech, has an unpierced handle, and may perhaps be placed here, together with the urn from No. 6 of the Priddy nine barrows. 'It was dotted over with some blunt instrument when the clay was soft.'

The subject of the Somerset barrows is immense. Only the fringe has been touched. There is abundant work to be done both in collating the results we have, and in further excavation.

The pottery of the Bronze Age is interesting to the expert, but generally speaking, is not beautiful in itself;

<sup>1</sup> Balch. Wells Museum.

and a more worthy memorial to these people exists in the objects of everyday use that they fashioned in bronze. These include ornaments, tools and weapons, and not only do they exhibit the principle of evolution in their development, but in themselves they possess the beauty that belongs to an object created in accordance with the advantages and limitations of its material, and also perfectly adapted for the purpose for which it was designed.

Nearly 400 bronze implements have been found in Somerset, and they have been described roughly in chronological order. It will be seen that flat implements, gradually receding from polished stone forms, and fastened, when necessary, to hafts by rivets, were superseded by objects cast with sockets; an invention which not only made a more stable union between haft and tool possible, but also implied a great advance in methods of metal casting.

In the early group of bronze implements come a comparatively small number of flat axes. These are sometimes said to have been made in imitation of stone implements, though in other instances stone axes are said to have been copied from the flat bronze celt. The flat axe is a weapon of great celebrity in the Eastern Mediterranean. In Crete the double axe appears on the walls of one of the rooms of the Palace of Minos; and a flat axe-like figure is incised on the stones of the tumulus of Gavrinis in Brittany.

A flat celt or axe can be cast in a simple mould: a stone with a hollow triangle scraped in it is sufficient, so this was naturally an early form of bronze implement. In Somerset, flat celts have been found in the following places: On the high ground on Bannerdown, Batheaston, at the top of Cheddar Gorge, on Lansdown, on Sparkford Hill, in a fissure in the rocks in Ebbor Gorge, and on the Blackdown Hills near the Wellington Monument; and on the lower ground in a turbary near Glastonbury, while two are only known to be from Somerset, and one is said to be from Bath and is in the Bath Museum.

The Glastonbury celt is made of copper, the Ebbor

specimen is said to be copper or bronze, the material of the others is not stated.

The next step in the development of the axe was the flanged celt, in which the sides of the narrow part were curled up to hold the handle more securely. One such comes from Bath, one from Bristol, one from Burrington Coombe, found in a cavern 28 feet below the surface, and it has the edge expanded into a crescent, and the butt slightly expanded also. One from a turbarry at Glastonbury and another from Bristol have an incipient stop-ridge. This was to prevent the axe from splitting the handle by the force of the blow. A Taunton example is also flanged, but the finest examples are from Coombe Dingle, just north of Bristol, and over the border into Gloucester. These celts were buried beside a stream in a valley; they have crescentic cutting edges, slight flanges in two cases, and no stop-ridges.<sup>1</sup> One has wavy ridges parallel with the cutting edge, which may have helped to secure the handle, and another has a pattern of ridges parallel to the sides. A third has a rectilinear ornament formed of incised lines making chevron patterns. With them was an implement known as a Trunnion celt, a kind of chisel with two knobs near the pointed handle end. This has been ascribed to the close of the Bronze Age; but similar implements are figured by Evans with the Irish flat celt, which provides a far more satisfactory association than the later implements; certainly in this instance it would be very strange if one had several early bronze celts found with a very late Bronze Age chisel.<sup>2</sup>

DAGGERS.—While flat celts may belong to the first or second period of the Bronze Age, those like the Coombe Dingle specimens with the expansion of the cutting edge, incipient flanges and incised decoration, certainly belong to Period II, roughly from 1700 to 1400 B.C., and are associated with daggers with enlarged hilt-plates having either rivet-holes or tangs, and also with bead necklaces. The Somerset daggers are mostly of the kind attached to

<sup>1</sup> *Antiquaries' Journal*, V p. 51; *Proc. Soc. Antiq.*, XVIII, p. 239.

<sup>2</sup> Evans, *Bronze Implements*, pp. 68-9.

a handle by rivets, and many were found in round barrows. One that is now lost, that came from Burrington Camp and was found early in the nineteenth century, has been described as a bronze dagger with a gold hilt, set with turquoise. The Camerton dagger,<sup>1</sup> also from a barrow, is figured by Evans, who describes it as remarkable 'in having a kind of second mid-rib beyond two parallel grooves which border the first'. As usual, it has two rivets. From Northay barrow, a dagger with rivets was found with a cinerary urn; from the great Sigwell barrow, a dagger was found with burnt bones in a bark coffin; from Priddy barrow, one dagger with two rivets was found with burnt bones, and two others had parts of the decayed wooden sheath adhering to them. From Priddy barrow, also, there was part of a bronze spear or arrow-head, and a bronze ring found with an incense cup. Yet a third dagger came from barrow No. 7.<sup>2</sup>

From the large tumulus near Rowberrow Church, a dagger was found, and later on a bronze pin was picked up on the barrow; in a barrow at West Cranmore, a bronze dagger was found with a chisel-like flint flake, the end of which had been converted into a saw. With these were numerous flint flakes and scrapers. The dagger had a straight-ended butt which only went a quarter of an inch into the handle, and had a single rivet at each side, the one preserved being half an inch long.<sup>3</sup>

Daggers not from barrows have been found at Williton, in a field called Battlegore, at Norton Fitzwarren, Mid-somer Norton, Edington Burtle, Maesbury, where one knife is described as being 6 inches long and about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches wide. One is from the Glastonbury turbaries, one from Lansdown, a triangular knife, with a hole in it and rounded corners,<sup>4</sup> a dagger-blade or rapier from the Avon at Avonmouth, a point in the St. Catherine's Hoard, and two rapiers, one from Pen Pits, and one from the Glastonbury turbaries,

<sup>1</sup> Evans, *Bronze Implements*, p. 243, fig. 303.

<sup>2</sup> *Archaeological Journal*, 16, p. 148.

<sup>3</sup> Evans, *Bronze Implements*, p. 242.

<sup>4</sup> Found by Mr. J. P. E. Falconer (see fig. 8).

which is of the type described by Evans, *Bronze Implements*, page 248, as 'having blades cast with deep rounded notches in the base to receive the rivets, instead of having holes drilled or cast in them'. These are, no doubt, of later date than the broader knife-daggers, and may be classified in Fox's Group 3 or 4.

Dr. Fox puts the third Bronze period as occurring roughly between the years 1400 to 1000 B.C. This was a time of great movement in some parts of the world. It saw the rise of the important Ramassid Dynasty in Egypt, wiping out the failures of Ahkenaten and establishing the Empire.

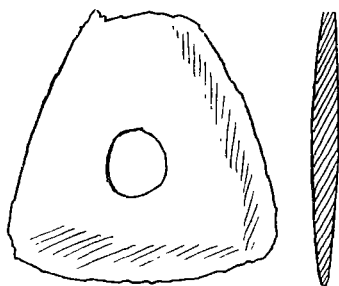


FIG. 8.—BRONZE KNIFE FROM  
LANSDOWN, BATH ( $\frac{2}{3}$ )  
(Discovered 1911)

It saw the end of the glories of the Kingdom of Cnossos in Crete, and the establishment and fall of the great Bronze civilization on the mainland; but in England there seem to have been no dramatic events of this momentous kind, and our bronze implements continued their evolution, not very much influenced by the foreign objects

that must have come into the country by way of trade.

Perhaps the most characteristic and certainly the most common implement, at any rate in Somerset, is the palstave. The term palstave is derived from an obsolete Icelandic word of uncertain meaning; it was thought to designate a hoe or digging stick when the implement was given its name, but a palstave could also have been hafted at right-angles to the shaft of the handle, if required, and was used as a sort of mattock.

So far, seventy-six have been recorded from Somerset, and no doubt more will be discovered, or re-discovered, as time goes on. For convenience, palstaves can be divided into those with and without loops. It is possible that the looped were later in date than the plain, but as both



are found together, and have sometimes the same ornament, this is by no means certain.

The earliest palstaves can be recognized by their low stop-ridges and crescentic cutting blades, a legacy from their predecessor, the flanged axe. From Athelney come two celts, both with crescentic edges, one with the flanges continued beyond the ridge, and one with the flanges merged in the stop-ridge. The former is ornamented with a shield-shaped ornament below the ridge.

The Combe St. Nicholas palstave has a very wide edge, and no ornament. This is also true of a palstave in the Bristol Museum, and another from Taunton which is similar to one from Odand's Meadow at Wellington, now at Taunton.

The Taunton hoard includes the only non-looped palstave that has also a shield-shaped ornament. A straight palstave of an early type, since the stop-ridge is low, is that at Taunton from Stoke Lane, and another at and from Bath. Edington Burtle and Stogursey have both produced axes with the chevron pattern below the ridge—in the case of Edington, combined with a mid-rib below the chevron, and in the Stogursey specimen with the mid-rib included within the chevron. From the Taunton hoard there are four non-looped palstaves, one with the chevron ornament. Other palstaves of this type are from Little Solisbury Hill, Bath, another from Bath with a raised bar across the lower end of the wings at the side, and faintly visible raised loops across the blade. Mid-ribs also adorn the palstaves from Combe Martin, Clatworthy, and from Bristol Bridge, and one from Westbury-on-Trym. One from Radstock has the blade filed.

Plain looped palstaves have been found at Radstock, Banwell, Glastonbury turbarry (three), Ham Hill, and one described as from Somerset. The ornaments below the stop-ridge are generally a central rib, a chevron, both combined, or several ridges. The Spaxton palstaves (two) found inside the rings of torques, had broad, low stop-ridges, but a great majority have the ridges merged in the wings. Of the Sherford palstaves, two have mid-

ribs, and four chevrons. Mid-ribs 'also ornament those from Rodney Stoke, King's Sedgemoor, Ilminster, Ham Hill, Wigborough, Callow, and several others. One from Buckland St. Mary has a vertical hollow in place of a mid-rib.

Some form of chevron can be seen in five from Taunton, one from Ham Hill, two from Edington, on a very fine

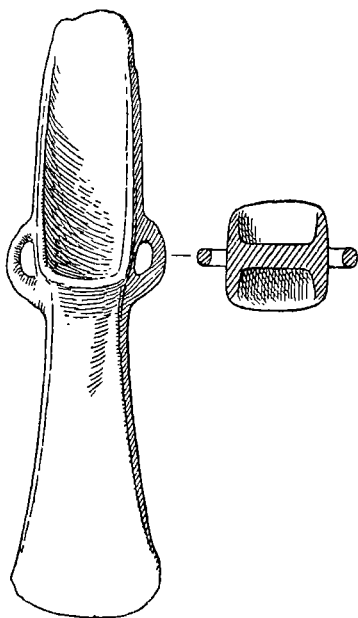


FIG. 9.—BRONZE DOUBLE-LOOPED PALSTAVE FROM CHEDDAR ( $\frac{1}{2}$ )

celt from Peasedown St. John, in which the sides of the blade are wavy, while three vertical, or nearly vertical bars are on those from Stogursey, and one labelled 'Somerset', now at Taunton. In some specimens, the chevron is narrow and rapidly becomes a rib, so that these specimens might fall into either class.

There remain three double-looped palstaves. These are rare in England, more common in Ireland, and well known in Spain, though rare in France. They may give some indication of the direction from which trade or immigration flowed to the West of

England in the Late Bronze Age. One in the British Museum is from Cheddar, with the central rib not very strongly developed on the blade. One from South Petherton is plain, while the third from West Buckland has two sides of a triangle incised below the stop-ridge.

SPEAR-HEADS.—There are a certain number of knives described as spear-heads that are difficult to separate

from the daggers. Such are one from Bannerdown, Bath, a second from the site of the Old White Hart Hotel at Bath, and one or two from Priddy barrows. Most of the spear-heads are socketed. When these were first made, some of them had loops, to help to secure them to their shafts. These gradually moved up the stem until they became little more than eyelets at the base of the blade, and were of no practical use. Finally they disappeared, and after that, spear-heads and lance-heads are classed by Dr. Fox as Bronze Age IV.

The implements with loops low down or half-way up the socket came one from Cheddar, where it was found in a meadow, another from Bristol, two from the Glastonbury turbaries, and one from Edington Burtle, which is distinguished by having a band of hatched triangles incised above three rows of parallel lines on the socket.

An implement from Combe St. Nicholas shows a transitional form, as the loops have left the socket, and are formed 'by the continuation of two ribs along the margin of the blade which are curved inwards from the base of the blade until they reach the socket'.<sup>1</sup>

After this the loops become part of the blade, as is shown from specimens from Edington Burtle, Yeovil, Loxton, Midford Brook, Sherford, two from the Glastonbury turbaries, and part of another in the St. Catherine's Hoard.

As the manufacture of spear-heads progressed, the blades tended to become longer and more leaf-shaped, and there are in the county one or two stumpy spear-heads that look as if they might be of an early type, though they had no loop, and one of these was found at Ham Hill Camp.

Socketed spear-heads with no loops came from Cadbury Camp, Somerset (probably the turbaries), and some scraps from the Stogursey Hoard, two from Taunton, and one from Sherford; while undescribed except as spear-heads are the specimens recorded from Sparkford, Dolbury, and Rowberrow.

<sup>1</sup> Evans, *Bronze Implements*, p. 328.

One spear-head without loops of somewhat unusual form came from Godney Marsh, and is now in the Glastonbury Museum. This is of the type differentiated from other blades by Evans, because the base of the blades is barbed.

TORQUES.—Perhaps the most fascinating of the bronze implements are the torques, and also the objects of gold. No less than twenty-five torques are recorded from the county. A torque was a metal collar or neck-band, and one form common in Somerset is the funicular variety, made of a piece of bronze, cruciform in section, and twisted so that the twist is that of a four-threaded screw.<sup>1</sup> Another form is of a narrow flat piece of bronze twisted on itself as a strap might be twisted, and fastened by hooks at the end. These are called ribbon-torques.

Pride of place belongs to the Yeovil torque of gold.<sup>2</sup> This was found in May of 1909 under peculiar circumstances. A gardener found the torque when he was digging in a small villa garden on Handford Hill. The builder of the villa said that the earth in which the torque was found was surface mould recently brought from three distinct areas in the neighbourhood. Therefore it was impossible to tell its late resting-place, and there was no evidence to prove that its original owner had intentionally concealed it. The Coroner opened an inquiry, and it was decided that the torque could not be technically considered 'treasure trove'. It was, therefore, bought for the County Society, in whose possession it still lies.

The torque is of the funicular or four-flanged variety,

'made of three flat plates of gold, about one millimetre thick, one being set medially and at right-angles to the broader band, and attached by some kind of solder. It was then twisted, and resembles a left-hand screw of four threads. It was fastened by means of hook terminals of the truncated cone pattern, turned up for interlocking. If the torque was straightened, including the terminals, it would measure  $21\frac{1}{4}$  inches. It weighs 5 ounces 7.5 pennyweight, Troy, and is, apparently, of pure gold.'

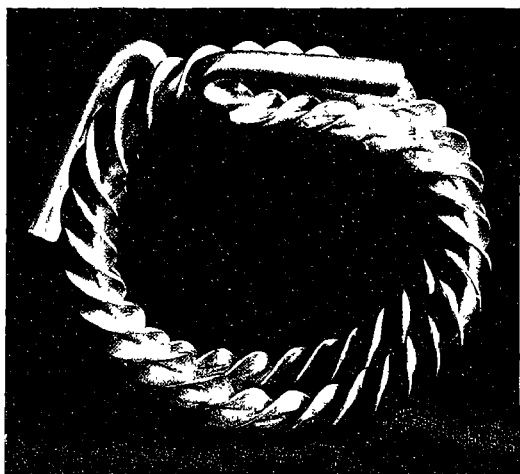
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<sup>1</sup> Evans, *Bronze Implements*, p. 375.

<sup>2</sup> S.A.S., LV (ii), pp. 66-84.



WRAXALL TORQUE  
Total diameter,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches



YEOVIL TORQUE  
Total length,  $21\frac{1}{4}$  inches



Several torques have been found associated with palstaves, so that it seems safe to assign them to this middle period of the Bronze Age.

The second Somerset gold torque came from Winterhay Green, Ilminster. We are told that the ornament was dug up with two palstaves.

'It was rolled up into a knob, but when opened it consisted of a long strip of gold, about a quarter of an inch in width, with a kind of crook at the end to fasten it with. It was a long piece, and its weight was about that of two guineas. If I recollect rightly, there were two similar pieces.'<sup>1</sup>

This was probably a torque, or, at any rate, a bracelet. The other torques are all made of bronze. Three came from the St. Catherine's Hoard, and are now in the Pump Room at Bath. The West Buckland Hoard contained a bronze torque with a right-hand twist. It was found with two looped palstaves.<sup>2</sup> The other torque came from Chillington Downs. This is of rather different form as it tapers from the front to the back both ways, and the flanges are not nearly so prominent as in the gold example.<sup>3</sup> The ends are hooked over to interlock, and so form a strong fastening. Its maximum external diameter is  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches, its thickness is 10.5 millimetres. It weighs about  $10\frac{1}{2}$  ounces.

From the Quantocks, one torque is described as having been discovered 'with a celt or battle axe';<sup>4</sup> two others were found in the parish of Spaxton in 1794. A palstave had been placed within each ring.<sup>5</sup> In the Edington Burtle Hoard, there were fragments of two torques again found with palstaves, bracelets, and rings. At Pen Pits a fragment was found; Wedmore provided three, two funicular, and one of the ribbon type, with hooked fastenings. They were dug up in the year 1806, 6 feet below the surface, with two celts. These implements lay together,

<sup>1</sup> Evans, *Bronze Implements*, p. 384.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. Journal*, XXXVII, p. 107 (plate).

<sup>3</sup> *S.A.S.*, LI (ii), p. 144 (plate).

<sup>4</sup> *S.A.S.*, LV (ii), p. 71.

<sup>5</sup> *Archaeologia*, XIV, p. 94, pl. XXXIII.

and a few amber beads strung on a wire were with them.<sup>1</sup> In Taunton, a large torque was discovered in a shop, where it had been used for many years for stringing the leather discs used in umbrella-making.<sup>2</sup> The Taunton Union Workhouse hoard also included one torque, again found with palstaves.

BRACELETS.—Bracelets were also of gold as well as bronze, and may be classed with the torques. A small gold bracelet was dug up by a labourer in 1898, at Compton Bishop.<sup>3</sup> It was in the shape of a heart and made of twisted wire. It is only  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches long and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches across. It is now in the Greenwell Collection in the British Museum.

Gold ornaments described as torques from Ilminster may have been bracelets ; otherwise the remaining bracelets are of bronze. Three now at Taunton came from the Edington Burtle Hoard, one from the Taunton Union Hoard, parts of seven from the St. Catherine's Hoard, and one from Camelot. At Sparkford, two bracelets of twisted pattern were found, said to be associated in a grave with wooden ornaments.<sup>4</sup> In the Edington Burtle Hoard, there was a penannular armlet, formed of a broad band of bronze, fluted horizontally, with a ring to match it.<sup>5</sup>

A bracelet from the West Buckland Hoard, associated with a double looped palstave and a funicular torque, was in three pieces, which, when joined, make a strap nearly 6 inches long. The bracelet is in the form of a flat band, beaded at each rim, and with a second ridge parallel to the first, making a kind of border. The space between the two ridges is filled with delicate vertical lines, apparently made with a tool.<sup>6</sup> Along the centre of the strip are a series of small bosses ; the bracelet appears to have been cast.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Journ.*, 1847, VI, p. 81 ; Evans, *Bronze Implements*, figs. 466, 467, 468, 469.

<sup>2</sup> *S.A.S.*, LV (ii), p. 71.

<sup>3</sup> Knight, *Heart of Mendip*, p. 334.    <sup>4</sup> *S.A.S.*, VII (i), p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> Evans, *Bronze Implements* (see Plate III, facing p. 88), p. 385.

<sup>6</sup> *Arch. Journal*, XXXIV, p. 167.

<sup>7</sup> Evans, *Bronze Implements*, p. 386, pl. 481.



RINGS.—Rings for personal adornment come, some from the St. Catherine's Hoard, another from Edington Burtle; this is a penannular ring of about 2 inches diameter, with a twisted ribbon of bronze threaded into it. There is also a fluted finger ring to match the fluted bracelet, and several others. One is a snake ring. There is a plain bronze ring of oval section from South Petherton, and a ring from the Taunton Hoard.

There remain one or two objects that come under no special category that belong to this period. Such is the gold Sun disc. It is made of bronze, gold-plated, and was found<sup>1</sup> in a barrow near the Grand Stand on Lansdown Hill, Bath, together with burnt bones. It is now in the British Museum. The disc is  $6\frac{3}{4}$  inches in diameter, the centre of the circle is surrounded by chevrons or rows pointing outwards. These are enclosed in a large raised circle, outside which comes a border of small raised circles, and a rim may have been fixed by copper wire hammered over the gold into the channel at the margin. The inner band encloses a star, probably of eight points.

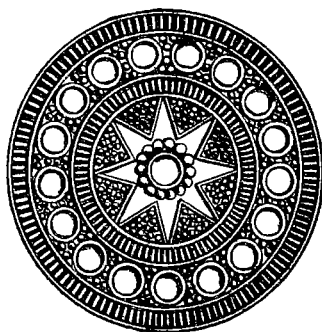


FIG. 10.—SUN DISC FROM  
LANSDOWN ( $\frac{1}{4}$ )

In the parish of North Cadbury several wedge-shaped ingots of gold were found and given to children to play with. One was kept and melted down for its value, which was 30s. (this was in 1910). There was no hole or other mark on the single ingot that was shown to a jeweller.<sup>2</sup>

From Bridgwater we have a piece of ring money, now displayed at the British Museum. It was dug out of the

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Antiq.*, 2nd Series, XX, pp. 6-13.

<sup>2</sup> *S.A.S.*, LV (ii), p. 70, note.

brick clay, and was 6 or 7 inches below the surface. It consists of one thick small ring; the geographical position of Bridgwater suggests that this may have been an importation, possibly from Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

Another gold object, possibly also ring money, was found at Galhampton, Castle Cary, over a hundred years ago, and was presented to Taunton Museum in 1925. It is a penannular gold ornament, hollow, triangular in section, and constructed from five pieces of thin gold. It is interesting to wonder if it was made to imitate ring money. It has been assigned to the Late Bronze Age.<sup>2</sup>

Yet a third piece of ring money was described by the late Mr. J. A. Davies as coming from Axbridge, and being in the Greenwell Collection.

Dr. Fox considers the last period of the Bronze Age to have begun in East Anglia in about the year 1000 B.C., but some other archaeologists believe the invasion of foreign peoples that marks its opening to have taken place between 800 and 700 B.C. Mr. Crawford thinks it may have been connected with the dispossession of the Swiss Lake dwellers by invading Kelts. It is unnecessary to discuss this matter at length here and for our present purpose it will suffice if we realize that a new folk settled in the land about this time and introduced the altered culture that we describe as the 'Late Bronze Age'. Who these folk were is no easy task to say; archaeology recognizes them as the importers of the leaf-shaped sword and bronze-socketed axe, and modern opinion is inclining to the belief that they were a Goidelic-speaking folk, our first Keltic invaders. But in this chapter it is only necessary to say what examples of the new culture in bronze appeared in Somerset, and to let future investigators interpret the evidence according to the fresh knowledge that may be acquired in England or on the Continent.

SOCKETED CELTS.—There are fifty-five socketed celts recorded to exist in Somerset. In the British Museum *Bronze Age Guide* it is explained how the socketed celt

<sup>1</sup> B.M., 89, 10-17, and S.A.S., I (i), p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> S.A.S., LXXI, p. lxxxii; *Antiquaries' Journal*, V, 141-4.

evolved from the winged celts, but-it is probably more correct to think of the new type of axe as an invention independent of the older types, even though some 'socketed celts' bear an ornament recalling the winged variety. Here we need only note that the winged celt is an exotic form in England, so in any case we must regard our socketed axes as a new fashion imported from abroad.

The socketed celts all have loops, but they vary in their general shape, in the section of the socket, which may be round, oval, or quadrangular, and in the ornaments on the face. At Ham Hill, Dr. Walter found in 1923 portions of moulds for casting such celts, made out of igneous rock.

Unornamented celts from Somerset come from the Battlegore mounds at Williton, two from Bath, one, small and thin with a square socket, from Axbridge, which rather approaches to the Gaulish type of another found from Bath, and now at Alnwick. Others undescribed are: two from Somerset, one each from Callow, Wraxall Hill, Wellington, and Taunton.

A common form of ornament is a bead round the top of the socket, from which three parallel vertical ribs expand down towards the blade. Such is the decoration on a celt from Meare Heath, found in 1929. The finder said that most of the handle was in the ground, and part is still adhering to the socket. A similar ornament is on two from Ham Hill, one from Sedgemoor, some from the Glastonbury turbaries, one from the Avon at Clifton, one from Bath in which the ribs ending in pellets<sup>1</sup> are apparently of French fashion, while there is a series from the Stogursey Hoard, most ornamented, but a few plain, and partly destroyed, from the Stradling Collection at Taunton. The Loxton example has on both faces an attenuated raised triangular device, depending from the moulded margin of the socket, point downwards, with a vertical mid-rib dividing the triangle into two halves. This is a rare form and is repeated in one from Stogursey.

A specimen from the Taunton Workhouse Hoard has

<sup>1</sup> Evans, *Bronze Implements*, p. 122.

also a triangular device, and one from the Stradling Collection has a single faint rib down the surface; while two from a Glastonbury turbarry have two vertical bars.

TOOLS.—A rare type of socketed chisel, which can be seen at Taunton, was found at Ham Hill, and a chisel with side-stops, the trunnion celt already described, came from the Coombe Dingle Hoard. A plain chisel was found at Sparkford, two ferrules from St. Catherine's Hoard, one with a tang, a third awl from St. Catherine's, a socketed hammer from the Taunton Hoard, while an

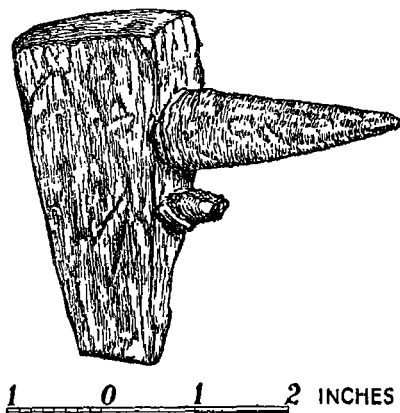


FIG. II.—ANVIL FOUND AT FLAX BOURTON

anvil, a very rare object, has been recently discovered at Flax Bourton, together with a palstave (see fig. II).

Socketed gouges have been found at Ham Hill, seven from the Stogursey Hoard, and one labelled 'Somerset' now at Alnwick Castle. Ham Hill has produced a socketed knife, very much like a chisel,<sup>1</sup> another socketed knife with a narrow blade and holes for rivets on two opposite sides of the sockets, found at Edington Burtle. A socketed knife with a single rivet-hole came from Newton St. Loe, and other socketed knives from the Stogursey and Taunton Hoards.

<sup>1</sup> *Antiq. Journ.*, VIII, pp. 241-3.

**SICKLES.**—There is a type of flat sickle that seems to be peculiar to, or at any rate to be chiefly found in the western counties, and with these Somerset is well provided. They were hafted by means of rivets or a projecting knob, and were not socketed. Four came from Edington Burtle, some with ornament on the blade, which is made with varying curves. The Sparkford sickles are very much smaller. Parts of three more came from the St. Catherine's Hoard, and two from the Taunton Hoard. No socketed sickles are recorded.

**RAZORS.**—A razor from the Taunton Workhouse Hoard has a tang, and probably belongs to an earlier period, and may probably be an arrow-head, under which heading it has already been described. It can be seen in the Bristol Museum.

A bronze object from Glastonbury is now in the Evans Collection at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. It consists of a hollow ring with four equidistant mouth-pieces round the outer edge. Its diameter is 57 mm., its thickness 20 mm., and its weight 120·38 grams. A similar object at Oxford is from Italy and is like the hollow rings from Ireland. Other specimens have been found in France, Alderney and Shropshire. Although its use is not known, it may well have been a piece of harness.<sup>1</sup>

**WINGED CELTS.**—Only two winged celts are recorded, one from the Avon at Bath, and one from Somerset in the Pritchard Collection, Bristol. Both have the wings only slightly incurved. That from Somerset has no stop-ridge and is very clumsily fashioned. They can hardly be regarded as characteristic specimens.

**PINS.**—Pins found in barrows may probably be classed as belonging to the earlier half of the Bronze Age, and such is one from a barrow at Camerton. It has a hollow spherical head with a double perforation: the head and the upper part of the stem are decorated with parallel rings and oblique hatching. Evans says it resembles pins from the Swiss Lake dwellings. It was found on a

<sup>1</sup> Ashmolean Museum, 1927, 2396 (Evans Coll.). See Evans, *Bronze Implements*, 1881, pp. 398-9.

flat stone at the bottom of a stone cist associated with cremation, an incense cup of Wiltshire pattern, and a small perforated whetstone. It is  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, and can be seen in the Bristol Museum.<sup>1</sup> An ivory pin was found in a barrow at Priddy, together with a spear-head with rivets; and a round-headed bronze pin that was found on a tumulus of the same date as the last mentioned, near the church at Rowberrow. Far later in date, belonging to Period IV probably, are the remarkable pins from Taunton and Chilton on Polden. The latter is almost 5 inches long and has a penannular head and a straight stem. That from the Taunton Hoard has an S-shaped stem, and is reminiscent of the swan-necked pins of the Hallstatt period. In section it is lozenge-shaped. Other interesting pins that came from Ham Hill are of the swan-necked variety, and one has a straight stem and a penannular head, ornamented by three swellings or blobs. This is exactly matched by a pin illustrated in the British Museum *Iron Age Guide*, p. 98, fig. 106, as from Ireland, and of the Hallstatt period.

**SWORDS.**—The leaf-shaped swords found in Somerset are not very numerous. One, described by Evans, was attached to the handle by rivets and is said to come from Tiverton,<sup>2</sup> near Bath; but this should probably be Twerton.

Another of this shape was found at Pitney and a fragment from Bristol. One sword came from Cheddar, another with three rivets from the Glastonbury turbaries, and bases of several of a late type from Stogursey. A very interesting sword was found at Midsomer Norton with a quadrangular aperture in the base, and two holes in the upper part of the handle. This is a proto-Hallstatt example.<sup>3</sup>

A scabbard end, socketed, with a hole on both sides, was in the Stogursey Hoard.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 369.      <sup>2</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 284, fig. 346.

<sup>3</sup> Peake, *Bronze Age* (Plate XIV); *S.A.S.*, XXII (i), pp. 69-72.

<sup>4</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 304, fig. 368.

There only remain the hoards taken as a whole to be described.

From the Early Bronze period, there is the Coombe Dingle Hoard. This has been described among the Flat Axes with flanges.

There is a record of a hoard from Beacon Barrow, Priddy; while removing some stones from the barrow, a workman came upon twenty heavy bronze implements. These were sold for a gallon of cider, and no further record of them remains.

The Sherford Hoard of six palstaves and a spear-head may have belonged to the Middle Bronze period, together with the West Buckland Hoard of a torque, two looped palstaves and a fragment of a bracelet.

The Compton Martin Hoard was discovered by a farmer while digging a drain, and its site was below the hills. He put the numerous objects in a sack, and they were gradually dispersed. A single surviving specimen, a palstave, was given to Mr. R. R. Read a few years after the war and was by him presented to the Museum of the B.U.S.S.

The St. Catherine's Hoard on the 366-foot contour line is the only hoard besides that at Priddy, on the comparatively high ground. It comprises torques, bracelets, palstaves, ferrules, knife-blades, a hollow cone, a borer, and fragments of a spear-head. It could be seen in the Pump Room at Bath in 1929, but has now been removed. Strictly speaking, it does not belong to Somerset, as it was found just over the county border in Gloucestershire.

The Wick Hoard from Stogursey, found on the flat land, was undoubtedly a founder's hoard, and included many jets from castings as well as palstaves, socketed celts, gouges, daggers, swords, and spear-heads.

The Taunton Workhouse Hoard consisted of twelve palstaves, torques, sickles, and pins from the end of the Bronze period.

The Edington Burtle Hoard came from the turbaries or peat-bogs, and included palstaves, a socketed knife,

sickles, torques, armlet and finger rings, and a dagger. Its discovery is described as follows :

'A young boy named Murch went to help carry turf in the turbarry. He saw a log of wood, and found it was a square box of maple which fell to pieces when he touched it. The hoard of bronze was inside the box.'

Various objects of bronze are recorded as having been found in the Glastonbury turbaries, but it does not appear that they were all found together, as they represent different periods, so that they can hardly be regarded as a hoard, though they clearly show occupation of the site.<sup>1</sup> The objects include an early flat copper axe, a bronze axe with flanges and stop-ridge, two palstaves, and two socketed and looped celts.

<sup>1</sup> *S.A.S.*, XLVIII (i), p. 83.



## CHAPTER V

### THE EARLY IRON AGE

**T**HE principal divisions of the Early Iron Age are, like those of the Stone Ages, named after the continental sites where they were first identified and studied. Thus, the early period, from about 900 to 500 B.C. on the Continent, bears the name of the cemetery at Hallstatt in Austria ; while the later period, from 500 B.C. to, roughly, the beginning of the Christian era, is called after the excavated lake-side site of La Tène in Switzerland.

At the time of the Hallstatt cemetery bronze was still extensively used, but iron was being smelted and wrought ; and, as the years passed, the relative proportions of the two metals gradually changed, until by the time of the La Tène settlements iron was the more common of the two ; yet even in Roman times bronze was still used for certain purposes, such as brooches and mirrors, as it was obviously a more beautiful metal than iron. The Hallstatt period has been subdivided into two parts, known as early and late Hallstatt ; while the La Tène period has, for the purposes of English archaeology, subdivisions numbered I to IV. One of the easiest ways of classifying metal objects in this period is by the use of the brooch as an index, for this everywhere develops on the same lines, so that particular stages in its evolution are held to be characteristic of each of the La Tène sub-periods, and have thus a high chronological value, for it is probable that the date of the deposit is not later than that of the most recent brooch found therein.

The people who brought the Hallstatt culture to England seem to have been contemporary with, if not close kindred to the people dealt with in the last chapter (p. 92), who

were responsible for the Deveril-Rimbury urns which form a large part of the secondary interments in the barrows at the close of the Bronze Age. The urns of this type from the Mendip region have already been described, but those from Kingsweston Down, though similar, may perhaps be mentioned here, since one barrow at least from this site is certainly of later date; it contained an iron fragment of horse-harness.

Two burials of this period were dug by the Spelaeological Society on Kingsweston Down,<sup>1</sup> a ridge of high ground almost in the angle where the River Avon meets the Severn. One of these barrows yielded a biconical urn. A third barrow on the same site belonged to the later Hallstatt period. In this flattish barrow a circular hearth was discovered, and on it lay parts of a small shouldered bowl, ornamented with finger-tip decoration, together with iron fragments of horse-harness, these last showing that the people concerned in the burial were horse lovers and users.<sup>2</sup> The body had been cremated, and this is interesting, because the intercourse between Britain and France at this time was usually with the north-east of France, where inhumation was practised. Thus, the Somerset burial after cremation points to intercourse rather with the north-west of France, a district with which south-western England was also connected, in the later La Tène period, so that it seems that the bond between the south-west of Britain and Armorica was already formed thus early in the Iron Age, and is not, therefore, an isolated relationship of La Tène times. Another barrow, probably of the same date, on Kingsweston Down, yielded a biconical urn.<sup>3</sup> The barrows of this time are far smaller than those of the Bronze Age and can easily be overlooked, but without doubt, more of them will be discovered and excavated in the course of time.

An important settlement of the Hallstatt period which seems to have continued into La Tène times was on Little Solisbury Hill, north-east of Bath. If, as seems probable,

<sup>1</sup> *B.U.S.S.*, vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 238, 240.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239, T. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241, T. 3.

the Lausitz culture people settled in south and eastern England, the Somerset folk must have formed a western extension of the settlement. From the camp on Solisbury Hill, Mr. J. P. E. Falconer has found pottery of the typical Hallstatt style with finger-tip ornament and flattened rims, extremely like the pottery of these peoples found by Mrs. Cunnington at All Cannings Cross. From Solisbury also came a typical shouldered annular pin, a weaving comb, a shale bracelet, a bone bracer exactly matched by one from All Cannings Cross, and a bone, possibly a bone phallus, about  $1\frac{3}{8}$  inches long. The site is on the top of a hill, and is surrounded by a low bank, which contains dry-walling and also traces of burnt wood, as though a palisade had been erected round the camp.

From the great camp on Ham Hill, near Yeovil, which was occupied through the La Tène period until Romano-British times, comes also similar pottery and shouldered pins of bronze.<sup>1</sup> One with an annular head decorated with blobs or pellets is exactly similar to one from Ireland, figured in the *Early Iron Age Guide* of the British Museum.<sup>2</sup> Similar pottery was found in Keinton Quarry, near Somerton, and is in Glastonbury Museum, and also from Worlebury Camp. It can be seen in the Weston-super-Mare Museum.

In the Taunton Museum there is a fine bronze bracelet in the form of a snake twisting three times round the arm. This was found at Roadwater, near the Brendon Hills, and belongs to the Hallstatt period. Pottery similar to that from Solisbury has also been found in Rowberrow cavern (Museum of the Spelaeological Society), at Chelms Coombe, and Blaise Castle. Without doubt, more will be forthcoming shortly to show the distribution of this culture. The latest of the leaf-shaped swords described in the preceding chapter is also of a proto-Hallstatt type.

A bronze brooch of this period was found near Taunton, and is now in the British Museum. It is a very fine specimen, belonging to the seventh century B.C., and is boat-shaped, of an Italian type. A second brooch of this type

<sup>1</sup> *S.A.S.*, LXX, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> *Early Iron Age Guide*, Brit. Musm., p. 98, fig. 106.

was found in 1861 by Mr. John Moore, of West Coker. While making excavations in his field at a depth of from 2 to 3 feet he came upon Roman remains. This Italian brooch was amongst the personal ornaments, so that it seems probable, as Mr. Moore conjectured, that the villa was built on a site occupied in Hallstatt times. Both are similar to one found at Box, just over the Somersetshire border. This specimen is now in the Wyndham Museum, at Yeovil (see Plate IV).

When we come to the later La Tène period, usually thought to begin some time after 500 B.C., conditions have entirely changed in Somerset, and, in the later stages of the period at any rate, the material is so plentiful that it is no easy task to do justice to the archaeological wealth of the county. The lake villages of Glastonbury and Meare, the cave settlements of Wookey Hole and Read's Cavern, and the fortified camp on Worlebury Hill, all supply an almost complete picture of the life and civilization, and even of the physical types of the people living in Somerset in the last two or three centuries before the Christian era. The study of this period is of particular importance, for the work of the Romans and the conditions in Roman Britain can only be understood if it is realized to what a high degree of civilization the Britains had reached when the Romans arrived, and that the invaders had not, in the south at any rate, as is so often believed, to deal with hordes of painted savages, ill-armed and ill-disciplined.

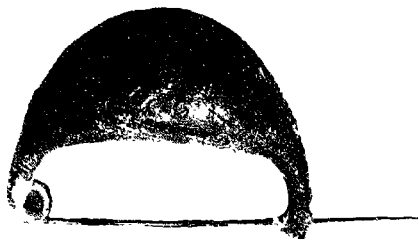
The origin of the people whose work has now to be considered, and who lived at Glastonbury, Meare, Wookey and on Mendip, is difficult to determine. Their skeletons have been found at Wookey, Worlebury and Glastonbury, and show them to have been a smallish, oval-headed folk with a cephalic index of from 76-78, and an average stature of, according to Macalister, from 5 feet 3 inches to 5 feet 8 inches.<sup>1</sup>

When Coronation Road, Weston-super-Mare, was being constructed in 1902, three pits were discovered containing burials. The pits were sunk about 3 feet 6 inches in the

<sup>1</sup> *Glastonbury Lake Village*, vol. 2, pp. 683-4.



HALLSTATT BROOCH FROM TAUNTON. 6 inches long



HALLSTATT BROOCH FROM WEST COKER. 3½ inches long



BOWL FROM GLASTONBURY  
Diameter, 4½ inches. Height, 3⅛ inches



broken rock below the 2 feet 6 inches of top soil. They were filled with a sandy deposit mixed with charcoal. The first pit contained two skeletons, male and female, in a crouching position, together with sling-stones and coarse pottery, with broken bones of horse, ox (*bos longifrons*) and sheep. The second pit contained the cranial bones only of a young child, together with animal bones and broken pottery. The third pit contained only broken animal bones. The cephalic indices were said by the finder to be 72 in the male and 71.4 in the female, and the stature about 5 feet 4 inches.<sup>1</sup> However, in his summary of the physical characteristics of the E.I.A. skeletons in the district, Sir W. Boyd Dawkins gave the cranial index as 76.5.<sup>2</sup>

The interest in these graves lies in the fact that they are the only interments that we have of this period in the county, and it is interesting to note that in this instance inhumation and not cremation was being practised.

The physical characteristics of these men suggest that they incorporated elements of the Beaker and Bronze Age population; but all the details of their craftsmanship, such as the ornamentation of their pottery and metal work, clearly show that they shared what is recognized as the characteristic Keltic civilization of the La Tène period. Thus the chief element in the population, not necessarily in numbers, but in authority, must have been supplied by invaders bearing this special and new Keltic or La Tène culture.

That these invaders came from the Continent is clear; but where from exactly we cannot at present tell. Originally, no doubt, they wandered from the Rhinelands of Central Europe; but probably they did not reach Britain directly from there. Recent investigation has shown affinities between Glastonbury and Cornwall (Chun Castle), and Cornwall and Spain (Galicia). Thus it may be possible that the men of Somerset came from Spain to Cornwall in search of tin, and, spreading eastwards, perhaps along the Severn channel, reached Glastonbury and Wookey, and

<sup>1</sup> *S.A.S.*, LI (i), pp. 50-51.

<sup>2</sup> *Glastonbury Lake Village*, vol. 2, p. 684.

were prevented from settling farther east by the Hallstatt folk entrenched in south-east England as far west as Solisbury Hill. But it is also possible that their immediate starting-point was Brittany, and it has been suggested that they may have reached Brittany from Holland. The investigation of this problem is complicated by the change in the land-levels in Armorica, which has probably led to the submergence beneath the sea of the Breton lake villages, if such ever existed.

These Keltic-speaking people of Somerset seem to have been peaceful enough ; most of their hill-top camps could have been used as cattle-pens, or refuges in occasional times of stress, and the number of weapons found in their homes is small in comparison with the size of the population and the abundance of their tools. However, during the last century B.C. the Belgae, an aggressive semi-German tribe from north-east Gaul, invaded Britain, and pushed their way from east to west, conquering the land as far north as the River Thames ; and were only checked in their victorious career by the coming of the Romans. Small quantities of pedestal ware that looks like the product of the Belgae have been found both at Glastonbury and in Read's Cavern, and two pedestals of Swarling type as far west as Ham Hill. These can be seen in the museums respectively at Glastonbury, Bristol University, and Taunton. It is possible that these invaders were the enemy who caused the farmer KELTS to take refuge in the uncomfortable recesses of Read's Cavern and to die defending the burning village of Glastonbury, or on the pillaged hill-top of Worlebury ; for all these settlements came to an end in blood and fire, but the existing Belgic pottery in the county is so scanty that it might well have arrived in the normal course of trade, so that if the Belgae raided the district they did not, apparently, settle in it. <sup>1</sup>

The La Tène Kelts were an extremely artistic people. Though their pottery in Somerset does not attain the great beauty and elaboration of the grave ware of Aylesford and the Continent, yet their pots, though sometimes the older

<sup>1</sup> See *Antiquity*, V, pp. 76-86.



chevron patterns were used, frequently show the characteristic Keltic curvilinear ornament wherein circles and arcs of circles were often linked into beautiful scrolls to make the most original and satisfying designs. These designs are entirely conventional, and yet they suggest, although definitely zoomorphic and foliate elements were never employed, the most decorative of natural forms, the taut curve of the leaping salmon, buds folded in leaves, and berries cunningly spaced. We do not find any objects save jewellery made solely for the sake of ornament. It is the ordinary articles of everyday use that are decorated; a bucket, pots, weaving combs, the bronze bowl, a sword-sabbard, or the terminals of a necklace.

So far the cemeteries of these people have not been found, so that it is unknown if a special and different pottery was made for the purpose of grave furniture.

GLASTONBURY. The most important of the La Tène sites in Somerset is the Glastonbury lake-village; but the site itself scarcely repays a visit as there is nothing to be seen except a few barely perceptible mounds, in a low-lying green meadow. The village was discovered by Dr. Arthur Bulleid, F.S.A., in 1892. He was looking for traces of such a settlement, and noticed charcoal thrown up by moles and rabbits. He obtained permission to dig, and eventually, with the help of Mr. St. George Gray, F.S.A., of the Somerset Archaeological Society, excavated the whole site. Their discoveries are published in two large volumes, *The Glastonbury Lake Village* (published by the Glastonbury Antiquarian Society, 1911), and the finds themselves are in the Glastonbury Museum. Although the site is 14 miles from the Channel, it is only 18 feet above the present sea-level, and, even in quite recent days, it has been flooded. At the time of its occupation the place must have been a shallow mere with a peaty bottom. After its desertion it was apparently flooded again, for the remains of the village were found embedded in peat. The settlement covered from 3 to 4 acres, and altogether ninety huts were excavated. A palisade surrounded the whole, the posts of which ranged from 5 to 14 feet in height; and a causeway

formed a sort of landing-stage for the boats. The houses were not built on piles like a modern pier, but stood upon a substantial platform foundation made of brushwood, felled trees, prepared logs, morticed beams, stones, and rushes, surrounded by piles. In this foundation horizontal beams were embedded, and morticed into them were the uprights which formed the supports of the outer walls of the huts. All the huts were circular, but traces remained to show that at an earlier time some had been rectangular. A centre post sometimes supported the roof, which was probably thatched with rushes, and the walls between the uprights were constructed of wattle and daub, that is, plaited mats of withies well covered with clay. The hearths were usually in the middle of the floors ; a rather dangerous practice if a central pole was present ; and were made either of clay or of lias slabs. The clay must have been brought from Godney or the Glastonbury Hills, a distance of at least half a mile, and the lias slabs from the north side of Glastonbury Tor.

It was evident that the floors tended to sink into the mere, and that repairs were executed by spreading a fresh layer of clay on the old foundation ; and when this was necessary, the house was sometimes rebuilt on a larger ground plan. Several superimposed floors were frequently discovered. The huts were from 20 to 30 feet in diameter, and a few seem to have been divided into more than one room. In some cases flooring boards were found. The doorways were from 4 to 7 feet wide, and one door of solid oak remained. There were traces of pathways from hut to hut. The carpentry was good, and when the peat was first removed the axe-marks showed as freshly as when they were made. The palisade was strengthened by posts driven into the peat, to which piles and beams were morticed. Inside the palisade was a pathway about 5 feet wide, built of clay and stones, so that it was possible to walk round the ramparts, and also to fish or watch for enemies. The causeway led out from the palisade. A dugout canoe 17 feet long was found, and may be seen in the Glastonbury Museum. It can be classified with a second

boat found in the peat at Shapwick. Dr. Fox places them both in group III B1 of his 'monoxylous boats'. The Glastonbury example is flat-floored and tapers regularly towards either end. The Shapwick specimen has approximately parallel sides with rounded ends. The Glastonbury boat measures 17 feet long, that from Shapwick 16 feet 6 inches measured straight from stem to stern. A third boat is described by Stradling as 'a very large canoe formed from an immense oak, long known as "Squire Phippen's big ship"', and it made its appearance in the turbaries in dry seasons and was eventually broken up and used by cottagers for fuel'. Near by were found three paddles, one of which is now in the Taunton Museum. It is  $24\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, and came from Edington Burtle. A portion of a second boat, not made of oak, was found in the Glastonbury lake village in 1895. 'The fragment was 20 feet long, and included half of the bow end, and part of the starboard side. It probably once belonged to a boat of much greater length.'<sup>1</sup> Charring and tool-marks can both be seen on the inner surface. A bow, said to be British, was similarly found in the peat at Edington in 1842, and is now at Taunton. It measures 4 feet 11 inches, and has a groove running along the inner side.

The inhabitants of this little settlement led a varied life. They were, above all, husbandmen; but they also produced textiles and pottery, and knew how to smelt metals. It appears that certain huts were set apart as workshops for these industries. The objects found have been classified by Dr. Bulleid and Mr. Gray according to the material of which they were made, and we cannot do better than to follow this arrangement. The most beautiful of the bronze objects is the famous Glastonbury bowl made of hammered bronze (see Plate IV, facing p. 102). It is only  $3\frac{1}{8}$  inches in depth and  $4\frac{1}{8}$  inches in diameter. It consists of two distinct parts, lip and rim overlapping the lower part of the bowl to the extent of 10 millimetres. At three almost equidistant points, along the line of junction, groups of three rivets occur, triangularly arranged and touching one

<sup>1</sup> S.A.S., LII (ii), pp. 51-4.

another, the apex of the triangle towards the rim. The upper rivets are merely ornamental. In several places the bowl was damaged during use, and rather clumsily repaired: but some holes in the bottom were mended with two thin plates of metal, which were fixed over the fractures by means of rivets, much as we mend kettles to-day. From the number of repairs made on it, the bowl seems to have been highly valued by its owner.

A number of brooches, almost all of late La Tène types, were discovered, also penannular brooches: in these the pin is fastened loosely to a nearly complete circlet of metal through which the point can be passed, after the pin has been run through the stuff of the dress, and locked by rotating the ring. There were also finger rings to suit all fingers, even very young ones, and bracelets, dress fasteners, pins, studs, tweezers, and a bronze mirror. Tools, such as punches and awls, were made of bronze, and there were also bronze harness-trappings, and terret rings. The horses were as well treated as their masters.

Lead was probably obtained from kinsmen who lived on Mendip top, and was used for net-sinkers, and is also the material of a rod, possibly once gilded, and of a weight of Roman type. Lathes were evidently used, since bits of turned Kimmeridge shale and shale bracelets were found, while crucibles were employed for melting copper. The sides of these pottery crucibles were too thick for it to be possible to melt the metal in them by applying fire externally; so the vessel was sunk in a shallow hole in the earth, which protected its base and sides, and a charcoal fire was lit on top and fanned until the metal became molten. This is evident from the marks of fire on the lips of the vessels. The same method for melting metals is still in use in Japan.

Iron seems to have been easily obtained. A few weapons of this metal were found, daggers, spear-heads and a piece of sword; but far more numerous were the knives, bill-hooks, sickles, saws (a splendid one is in the Museum), files, awls, bolts, gouges, adzes, rivets, keys or latch-lifters, and harness. Scraps of the smelting furnaces with the

*tuyères* or blast tubes were found in the village. Fragments of flat iron bars used as currency were also obtained, this being the usual medium of exchange in those days, yet coins were also struck, and there is half a tin coin of early first-century date among the finds.

Lathes were not only used for stone, but also for wood ; and in spite of the ease with which the material decays, a large number of wooden objects have been found, including wheel hubs and spokes, a ladder, a multitude of handles of tools such as saws, gouges, axes, adzes, and ladles, a fragment of an axle-box, and, lastly, a bowl on which a beautiful pattern had been incised. This was made from a solid block of ash, and was nearly 6 inches high, 12 inches in diameter, and  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch thick at the base.<sup>1</sup>

Bone was freely used for making handles and for other purposes. Some of the most notable bone finds are combs. The design of diamonds on the handle is common, as are dots and circles.<sup>2</sup> Other bone objects also found were buttons, beads, dice and a dice-box (and it may be noted that one die had two sixes on it), needles and potting tools. Deer antler was employed for making handles, hammers, cheek-pieces and ferrules.

The pottery is interesting because, more than anything else, it helps to date the village. Practically no Roman ware was recorded as found, so it looks as though the settlement had not long survived the Roman conquest, if indeed it did at all. Though the potter's wheel was known before the end of the settlement, most of the vessels are hand-made. The paste is usually burnished black to grey : there was a fine ware for the choicer pots and a very coarse paste for the storage kitchen pots. The designs are incised and in some ways recall the patterns on Bronze Age pottery, as chevrons and hatching are often seen ; but an entirely new feature is the number of curvilinear patterns, many of great beauty, and all of definitely La Tène character. The vessels represented are of many forms ; some with perforated bases that may have been honey strainers, some

<sup>1</sup> *Glastonbury Lake Village*, pl. LI.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I, p. 273, fig. 58 (illustration).

with lugs, others like shallow bowls, while yet others resemble a child's mug or even his toy.

Baked clay was also employed for loom weights and sling stones. Flint was still in use for scrapers and arrow-heads, and one flint saw was found in the village. The querns were some of them saddle-backed, while the rotary quern was also known before the village was destroyed.

Glass was only used for beads, of which there is a beautiful collection. The colour of the beads can be best seen when

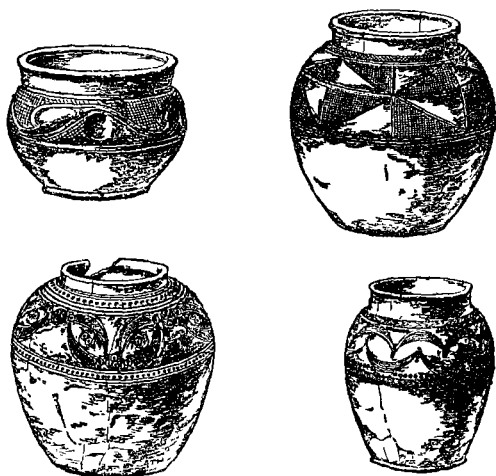


FIG. 12.—POTTERY FROM GLASTONBURY LAKE VILLAGE

the rings are held up against a bright light. Blues predominated, but there were beautiful specimens of sea-green, light and dark yellow, mauve, and clear glass ornamented in vitreous paste. The forms were of three types, globular, globular ornamented with bosses, and ring-shaped. There was one ring of jet and five of amber. A coloured plate is given in the *Glastonbury Lake Village* book which shows the colours very well.<sup>1</sup> One scrap of glass slag found on the site suggested that glass was manufactured in the village.

<sup>1</sup> *Glastonbury Lake Village*, vol. II, pl. LIX.

The wild plants found are those familiar to us, and include water-lilies, sedges and pond weed, while the trees were maple, hawthorn, guelder, bramble and hazel. There were few weeds of cultivation. The crops consisted of broad beans, peas, wheat and barley. Buns, or flat cakes of whole wheat, possibly held together by honey, were found. They had probably been baked in the ovens of burnt clay which were in some of the huts.

The animals were like our own. The wild species were stag, roe-deer, otter, beaver, boar, and cat. The domestic animals included ox, sheep, goat, pig, horse, and dog, with the common fowl. Among the many varieties of birds shot or trapped by the villagers, were pelicans, heron, bittern, swans, sea-eagles and many more species.

Such are the treasures in the little museum at Glastonbury, and they give a vivid picture of the busy agricultural life of the village dwellers, tilling their fields and minding their herds; repairing their houses, carrying on household tasks, making household objects, and making them finely and well, and withal using their leisure to make them beautiful.

MEARE. The lake village of Meare, not far from Glastonbury, is still being excavated. Working for the Somerset Archaeological Society, Dr. Bulleid and Mr. Gray spend several weeks each year, generally in September, in digging some of the mounds, but the collective results of the work are not yet published. A report on the work already completed was read to the Society at the Annual General Meeting in 1926,<sup>1</sup> from which it appears that already some differences have emerged between the two villages. Whereas the Glastonbury dwellings were built near the eastern border of Meare pool in comparatively deep water, and therefore required a palisade to protect them, the Meare huts were constructed in swamp or shallow water occupying a bay on the south-west side of the lake, and so far no protecting wall or palisade has been discovered.

On the whole it appears from a close examination of the artifacts that the Meare village was in existence some years

<sup>1</sup> *S.A.S.*, vol. LXXII, p. xlv.

earlier than the Glastonbury village. This is illustrated by the fact that the earliest type of brooch found at the latter settlement belonged to the period of La Tène II, while one of the type of La Tène I was found at Meare. Meare has also produced a shale armlet of the type associated with Hallstatt remains. Again, the proportion of saddle to rotary querns was much greater at Meare than at Glastonbury, also pointing to an earlier date. On the other hand, Meare seems to have continued its existence well into the first century A.D., since Roman pottery was found practically on a level with the first dwelling floor.

The Meare village is not so concentrated as that at Glastonbury, for it appears to have consisted of two groups of dwellings separated by some 150 yards of level ground. Each group is composed of about fifty huts, and the combined sites occupy parts of seven fields.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the finds from this site can be seen in the County Museum at Taunton.

WOOKEY HOLE. Next to the Lake Villages, the most important site is Wookey Hole. This is a cave on the south side of Mendip, about 2 miles north of Wells, and it can be reached by road or by taking the train to Wookey station. The name is said to be derived from the Keltic word *ogo*, meaning a hole or cave.

Since 1927 the cave has been made a show-place to which the public are admitted on payment of a shilling. This is greatly to its advantage, for its beauties are more easily seen by electric light than by the paraffin flares which were formerly used to show it. Wookey is not far from the wild and beautiful Ebbor Gorge, which must have been frequented by the cave-dwellers. The visitor to the cave walks up a narrowing valley which is closed by a rock face 200 feet high, from the foot of which flows out, dark and smooth, the young River Axe. It is a most impressive spot: the contrast between the grey stone and the evergreen ivy and laurels accentuates its sombre beauty at all seasons. The cave is entered up an incline, and after a narrow passage has been passed, three great chambers open out, one from

<sup>1</sup> S.A.S., vol. LXXII, p. xlv.



the other ; the outstanding rock known as the Witch of Wookey is shown, and the Axe is seen to broaden into a subterranean lake. Legends have always clustered round the cave from the time of Clement of Alexandria, who is supposed to have had Wookey in his mind when, in the second century A.D., he wrote of a cave in Britain in which strange noises could be heard like ' the clashing of many cymbals '.<sup>1</sup> These noises are still heard from time to time, and appear to be due to a change in the level of the underground Axe.<sup>2</sup>

In the Middle Ages a witch was said to have inhabited the cave and to have plagued the villagers in many ways, till, in despair, they sought help from the Benedictines of Glastonbury. They were granted the services of a monk who came to the cave and turned the witch into stone. Stone she remains, and is shown to all the visitors to the cave. One of the ballads about Wookey can be found in Percy's *Reliques*.<sup>3</sup> The great chamber of Wookey, the underground lake, the stalactite curtains and pendants are well worth a visit for themselves ; but the ground of the cave has given up treasures even greater than its glittering roof, or than the cave pearls in its pools.

The cave has been explored and excavated by Mr. H. E. Balch, F.S.A., and the results are published in *Wookey Hole, its Cave and Cave Dwellers*, Oxford University Press, 1914 ; the finds are to be seen in a museum in Wells, near the Cathedral.

The Wookey folk were obviously of the same stock as those at Glastonbury, but they may have been a poorer community. One great difference between the two sites lies in the fact that while the lake village was abandoned before Roman times, the cave was continuously occupied until the fourth century A.D., for it yielded one coin of the Emperor Valentinian (A.D. 364-373). Different parts of the cave seem to have been set aside for different purposes ; and a little way from the entrance goats had evidently

<sup>1</sup> *Clement of Alexandria*, Stomateis, bk. VI, ch. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Parish and Manor of Wookey*, Holmes.

<sup>3</sup> *Wookey Hole*, Balch, pp. 31-4.

been stabled, for a thick layer of goat's dung was found there together with the charred remains of a tethering stake, vertically embedded in the ground, a milking pot, a coarse weaving comb (was it used as a curry comb?), and the skeletons of two goats. In a fissure of the rock near by there was a human skeleton with its simple possessions, a bill-hook, a triangular knife with a bit of its wooden handle remaining, a tanged dagger, a stalagmite ball, and possibly a latch-lifter. Of the tragedy which these remains represent we can form no certain idea.

The pottery, like that from Glastonbury, is some of it fine and some of it coarse, but naturally presents more variety, as it extends through the period of the Roman occupation, so that false Samian, scraps of true Samian and other Roman ceramics are included. While the earlier ware was hand-made, the later was wheel-turned, and, on the whole, less admirable. It includes at least two pedestal pots of Aylesford type. The early ware has affinities with that of Armorica, and is decorated with both straight and curvilinear incised patterns.<sup>1</sup> It belongs to the earlier period of the occupation, and may have been, in the opinion of Mr. Balch, brought to the cave by the original occupants, as the paste and workmanship differ from that of the cave-folk themselves. It is, in common with all the pre-Roman pottery in the cave, the characteristic feature that the ornament is all above the point of widest diameter. A more typical form would be that illustrated.<sup>2</sup> In the Roman layers there were plenty of cooking pots, drinking cups, strangely like modern tumblers, some delicate little vessels, perhaps for condiments, mortaria with rough inner surfaces, and mortarium stones for grinding. Saucepans of coarse ware abounded near the hearth. They were never ornamented and often sooted. The iron implements were also many of them Roman, and included a padlock, harness, currency bars, spear-, javelin- and arrow-heads, tools including saws, which, like those from other sites of this period, cut on the pull stroke, a tethering ring, a needle and a penannular brooch. Thanks

<sup>1</sup> *Wookey*, pl. XV, nos. 5 and 8.    <sup>2</sup> Fig. 12, p. 110.

to the comparatively dry atmosphere of the cave, the iron was very well preserved.

Fifty objects of bronze were found, but little lead, and this is surprising when it is considered how close the cave was to the Mendip lead-mines. Both before and after the coming of the Romans bronze was used largely for objects of adornment and personal use. In the cave there were bits of torques, studs for ornaments, buttons, finger rings, ear-rings, a spoon, a brooch and chain of thirteen links, and a scrap of silver ornament was found near the skeleton of a young girl. The querns were of various types, and were probably used for grinding wheat, acorns, peas, beans, and possibly bracken roots. There was a stone lamp, and just inside the cave were the hone-stones used by the reapers. Spinning and weaving were performed in the cave, for there were an abundance of spindle whorls and weaving combs ; and one little triangular implement that seems to have been invented for making three-ply yarn. Bone needles and pins were in every layer, and the early specimens are as well made as the later : many of the pins were found near the hearth, so that it seems probable that the folk slept near the fire, and having loosened their garments for the night, discovered in the morning that their pins had disappeared, probably among the ashes. Only two fragments of glass occurred in the pre-Roman layer, both scraps of beads ; but higher up many pieces of Roman glass were found. Part of a turning-lathe was also among the Roman deposits together with objects of Kimmeridge shale on which it may have been used. These included the shale bracelets which seem to have been fashionable at the time.

The bones found consisted of specimens from the ordinary food animals, short-horn ox, goat, horses, sheep and pig. Human bones were scattered with the others and were also chopped, so that the Wookey men, in the period just before and during the early part of the Roman occupation, may be suspected of having eaten their enemies upon occasion ; but it is important to remember that the evidence on this head is inconclusive, and as the ancient Britons elsewhere have never been convicted of this practice, it is possible

that these cave-dwellers at Wookey were, after all, innocent of the cannibalism that these human bones suggest.

The wood in the cave had mostly decayed, except where it was preserved in goat's dung. Of woven fabric nothing was found, but Mr. Balch considered that he recovered fragments of leather sandals. A skeleton found up on the hill-top at Priddy with artifacts of this age retained its dark hair, arranged in a plait with the ends turned back, a feature which suggests what the appearance of the cave-folk may have been like.

The wild animal bones represented the same species as those found at Glastonbury.

But little imagination is needed to reconstruct the life that was lived in the cave, which can never have been a luxurious dwelling. The only thing needed to complete our knowledge of the inhabitants is the discovery of their cemetery, but this must be left to time and chance, and the suspense only serves to whet our appetite for more intimate knowledge of the people themselves than that afforded by the scattered human remains in the cave.

READ'S CAVERN. This cavern was discovered by the University of Bristol Spelaeological Society in 1919. It lies west of Burrington Coombe, just south of Mendip Lodge wood; and the entrance is at the foot of a small cliff about 30 feet high, facing Blackdown. The disappearance into the ground of a small stream made it clear that a swallet hole was present, and it seemed probable that a large cave might be found. Accordingly digging was begun and 16 tons of earth removed, with no result. A final trial, a little more to the north, led to the welcome discovery of a passage hardly 10 inches high, which soon became rather larger and sloped precipitously down. The passage finally led the recumbent explorers, over delicately poised boulders, to a bank of scree and so to a large cave; which proved, when it was explored, to be about 140 feet long, 30 feet wide and 30 feet high. Many passages branched off from it, leading, in some cases, into small chambers. The stream flowed through the lower levels. Almost at once objects belonging to an Early Iron Age

settlement were found scattered on the floor, lying in the crevices of the rocks, or hidden in the small chambers. It was not until the cave had been completely excavated, and digging was begun outside the entrance, that the true history of the settlement became clear. The cave had been used as a temporary home, possibly as a refuge, by folk akin to those of the Lake Villages and Wookey. They had made their hearths in the cave and under the overhanging entrance, and had kept their treasures inside. Then one day an earthquake may have occurred, or some movement perhaps shifted the delicate equilibrium of the roof, and it collapsed, burying in its fall the inhabitants that were at the entrance and trying to escape, and sealing up the cave from observation from outside. This calamity explains why so few human bones were found inside the cave, and why it was not inhabited during Roman times; for its occupation ended in the first century B.C.

During the occupation the charcoal from the fires became mixed with the particularly oleaginous clay covering the floor of the cave, and it was in this material that most of the finds were made. They are described in the *Proceedings of the Bristol University Spelaeological Society*, and may be seen in the Society's Museum at the University.<sup>1</sup>

The pottery found in Read's Cavern was of the same type as that from Glastonbury, except that the more elaborate examples were missing. The kitchen ware was coarse, and of a grey-brown colour: the fine ware was black, the paste very smooth, and the incised patterns both curvilinear and composed of chevrons and cross-hatching. The pottery was, with one possible exception, hand-made.

Nothing of wood had survived the dampness of the cave, but when freed of rust the iron objects proved specially interesting. They included four keys or latch-lifters of various sizes, a larger number than is usual for a small settlement. One was found in the portal of the cave. The method of their use reminds us of Little Red Riding Hood. Instead of pulling the bobbin, the users must have slipped in the lifter and so lifted the latch, and, doubtless, walked

<sup>1</sup> *B.U.S.S.*, vol I, nos. 1, 2, 3; vol. II, nos. 1, 2, 1919-23.

in. There were also a fine set of iron slave shackles of good design, the iron edging to a wooden spade, and various rivets, handles and fragments of knives still in their bone hafts. In a small chamber of the cave below traces of flooring wattle and daub which had evidently subsided, closing the entrance, and letting its contents fall into the chamber below, were four bronze rings  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches

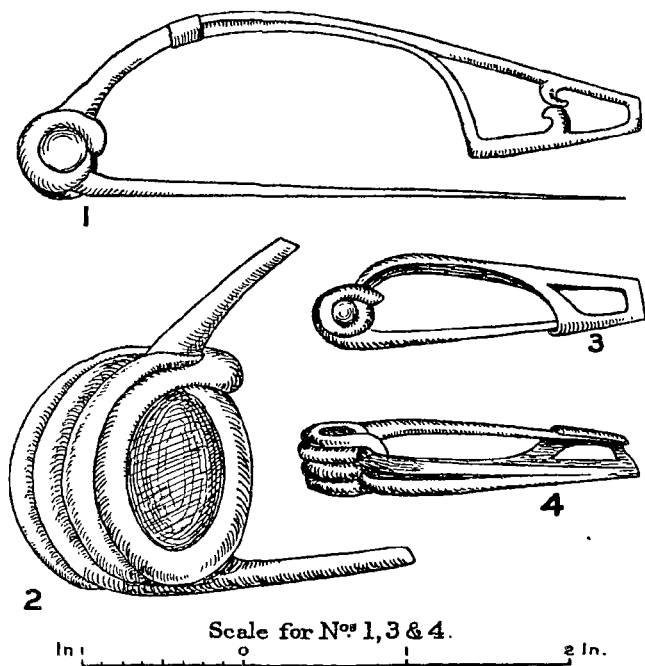


FIG. 13.—TWO LA TÈNE BROOCHES FROM READ'S CAVERN, BURREN

in diameter and in a fine state of preservation. These were the hub-bands of a chariot; one had been broken and mended by soldering. Bone and antler handles, cheek bits and needles were found, and a perforated tusk of a wild boar. Spindle-whorls were in the cave, but no weaving combs; a fact which again suggests that the occupation

was only temporary. Objects of personal adornment included rings and bracelets and two fine brooches of the period of La Tène II to III.<sup>1</sup> The bones of the food animals belonged to the same kinds of beasts as those represented in the other Early Iron Age settlements. This cave is unsafe, and so is not open to the public.

As no evidence of the smelting of iron was discovered in the cave, it is possible that the inhabitants prepared their metal in the neighbouring cave on Rowberrow Warren, where abundant traces of iron smelting were found.<sup>2</sup>

A second cave probably occupied during this period is at Tickenham.<sup>3</sup>

WORLEBURY. Another settlement of these same people existed on Worlebury Hill where they had entrenched themselves in their camp. This hill lies north of the town of Weston-super-Mare, and runs roughly east and west. The camp is at the western end where the ridge ends in a peninsula running out into the sea. It stands between two other similar promontories, Swallow Head to the north and Brean Down to the south.

The camp encloses about 10½ acres and is fortified by immense ramparts composed of unhewn blocks of limestone. Along the north face the rock falls away in a natural escarpment that made fortification unnecessary, but the walls were built along the east and south sides, and these defences were strengthened with ditches.

The whole settlement has been described by Mr. C. W. Dymond and the Rev. H. G. Tomkins in *Worlebury, an Ancient Stronghold in the County of Somerset*, printed for the authors in 1866. In this book it is said that although the walls now look like shapeless heaps of stone, they were originally built with rough stone cores faced or revetted with regular courses of dry masonry. Several of these alternating layers of core and facing stood together with the central mass probably overtopping the lateral sections, which thus formed continuous buttresses. None of the stones seem to have been worked, and no mortar was used.

<sup>1</sup> Illustration (see fig. 13, p. 118). <sup>2</sup> *B.U.S.S.*, vol. I, p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> *B.U.S.S.*, vol. II, no. 2, p. 175.

Within the camp, now overgrown by the Kew Stoke Woods, were 93 pits cut down into the limestone. They were of various sizes, but averaged 6 feet in diameter and 5 feet in depth. Some were so small that they can only have been used for storing grain and other produce, but the larger examples were possibly the centres of huts. The camp must have been taken by assault, for fragments of eighteen skeletons were found and many of the skulls showed wounds such as would have been received in battle. The contents of the pits were charred and included wheat, barley, pulse, wood and wattle. Shore pebbles, some broken, were amongst the ruins of the huts, and the finds from the site include a spindle whorl, flint cores, scrapers and arrow-heads, stone rubbers, a small bronze torque and ring, a penannular brooch, one blue bead and some iron javelin- and spear-heads, and scraps of harness. Some of these finds are in the Museum at Weston, others at Taunton.

The pottery is of the usual Early Iron Age type; and Roman pottery was found outside the pits with coins from A.D. 18 to the later Empire. The authors of the book on Worlebury think that the camp was deliberately abolished after the assault, and the ramparts thrown into the ditch; but whether the assailants were Britons or Romans we cannot be sure. The skeletons in the camp were of the same short, Iberian race as the Glastonbury folk.

**DOLBURY.** Another camp inhabited at the same time and also defended with huge limestone walls is Dolbury, only a mile to the west of Read's Cavern. This immense camp, with its neighbour Dinghurst on the opposite side of the valley, defended the main pass into the Mendips from the west. Objects proving its occupation in Early Iron Age times have been found within the walls. The entrance, which is at the western end, was elaborately defended by banks and ditches, and guarded the trackway which descended the hill and passed between it and Dinghurst opposite. The ramparts of this camp, running along the top of the hill, form an impressive outline against the sky and can be seen for many miles. The British settlement on Ham Hill was occupied by the Romans, and



became an extensive settlement. The earlier fortifications were added to in Roman times, and the whole has been excavated and admirably described in the *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological Society*. (See p. 144, and *Gazetteer*.)

Such are the more important of the occupied sites of the Early Iron Age that are at present known in Somerset, but the number of scattered finds of artifacts of the same period is great and includes many objects of considerable intrinsic excellence. Among the most notable are the splendid series of bronzes found in 1800 on the Polden Hills, above Edington. These are many of them in the British Museum, and others at Taunton and a few at Bristol. They had evidently been deposited together in a round

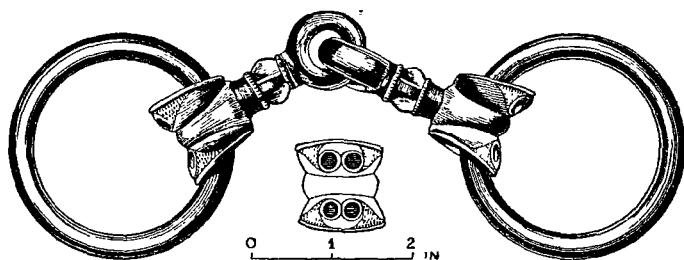


FIG. 14.—HARNESS FROM POLDEN HILLS

hole about the size of a bushel measure, the bottom of which was lined with burnt clay. They were scattered by the ploughshare that discovered them. The hoard consisted of some seventy pieces, principally harness trappings, and among them are a number of outstanding merit that represent the very best work of the late La Tène bronze founders and enamellers in Britain.

The best-known object is a magnificent ornament of dark and heavy bronze in the form of a loop with broad recurved ends; it has a bold decoration of flamboyant curves in red enamel, executed, as is all the other enamel work in this series, in the *champlevé* technique; it is 5.9 inches long and on the back it is provided with two loops and a hinged brooch fastening (pin missing). Another famous

ornament, with two loops on the back, is of golden bronze and has an openwork design ; it also bears a handsome curvilinear decoration in red enamel which is bordered by unusual vandyked lines ; this piece measures 3·8 inches in length. A third splendid example of enamel work, 6½ inches long, is a T-shaped ornament of dark bronze, made in two pieces and hinged ; it has an openwork head and the back is provided with a loop and brooch fastening. There is also a semicircular openwork ornament of rather

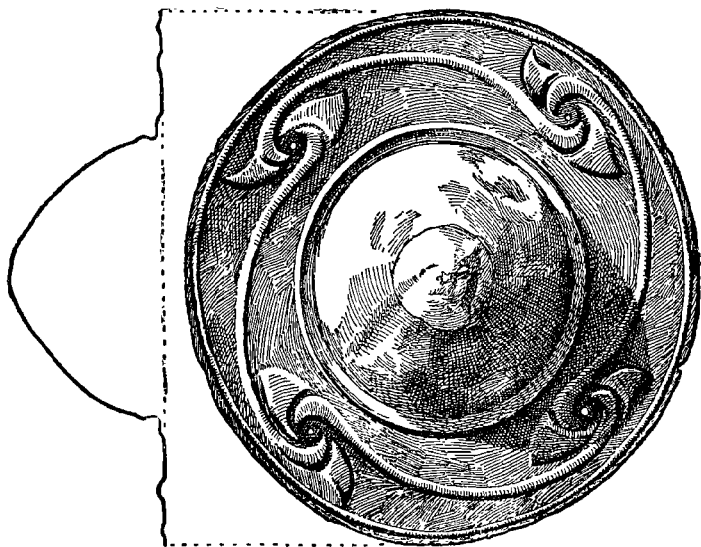


FIG. 15.—SHIELD BOSS FROM POLDEN HILLS ( $\frac{1}{3}$ )

thinner bronze plate that bears, in addition to settings for enamel, engraved decorations having either a hatched or basket pattern background ; this piece likewise has a hinged fastening and a loop at the back. The hoard, furthermore, contained seventeen flanged bronze terrets (rein-guides), of which nine are enamelled and engraved, six plain bronze terrets, fourteen bronze bridle-bits of which three were enamelled, five enamelled bronze cheek-pieces and two plain iron cheek-pieces, a bronze bridle-spur, and

five recurved bronze fittings with terminal scrolls and lobes of which two have coral studs at the hinge-ends (fig. 14).

An engraved and embossed ornament of thin bronze plate, perhaps a horse's frontal, ends the list of harness trappings in the Polden Hills hoard, but this wonderful find also contained a semicircular bronze horse-chape and three shield bosses of thin bronze, one with a straight-sided conical boss and one with embossed scroll ornament on the flat surrounding plate (fig. 15); there were also three bronze brooches of the first century A.D., one a magnificent specimen,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, with covered spring and openwork step-pattern in the foot (fig. 16). Another personal ornament was a massive iron torque bound with bronze wire, and besides this there was a pair of bronze armlets with overlapping ends.

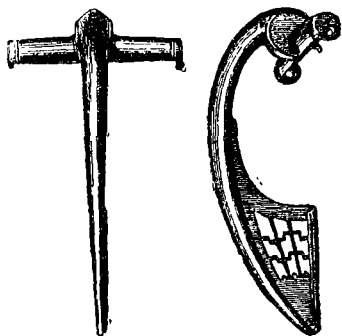


FIG. 16.—FIBULA FROM POLDEN HILLS ( $\frac{1}{2}$ )

Enamelling was an art that seems to have been practised from the period of La Tène II, and there is reason to believe that the Britons excelled in it more than any other race. The Somerset examples are as fine as any so far discovered; it is probable that the colour used at this time was red, though other colours were employed also later on. The earliest stones to be set in metal as ornaments by the Kelts were coral, so that red enamel may have been devised to simulate coral bosses.

A certain number of weapons of the La Tène period have survived, besides the Meare sword. From the Avon at Sea Mills there was dredged a short sword of the anthropoid type, about 15 inches long and belonging to the period of La Tène II or III. It is in the British Museum. It is typologically earlier than the anthropoid dagger and sheath found on Ham Hill, together with buttons and

rings. It is made of iron and is in a good state of preservation with a dagger-sheath. It was probably made in the first century B.C. It can be seen at Taunton together with a second iron dagger of simpler type, probably of a later period. A scabbard with a penannular ornament protecting the point is in the British Museum, and was found at West Buckland. It also belongs to the period of La Tène II.

Another interesting object was found during peat digging on Meare Heath in 1928. It is a very fine sword-scabbard in bronze, of the period of La Tène II; the design round the mouth of the sheath exhibits typical Keltic curves. It is in the County Museum at Taunton.<sup>1</sup> At Birdcombe Court, Wraxall, a magnificent bronze collar was dug up.

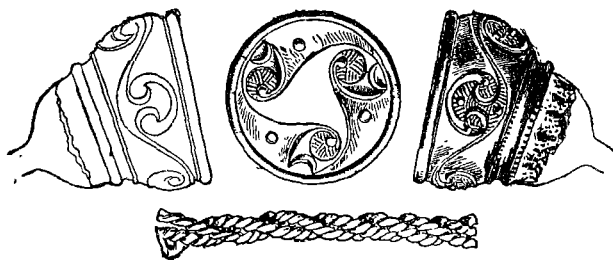


FIG. 17.—CLEVEDON GOLD TORQUE ( $\frac{2}{3}$ )

This collar is circular, and flat on the under side. It is hinged at the back and opens at the front where it widens in breadth. It has sockets for coral or some other stones, and the pattern is entirely curvilinear. It is very beautiful, and suggests a procession of breaking waves, while it has something of the continuity of the classical key pattern. It culminates in a cluster of stud-holes at the front. The torque may be seen in the Bristol Museum.<sup>2</sup>

It was at Clevedon that the only notable gold find of this period was made. This is a torque, now in the British Museum.<sup>3</sup> It consists of a triple-stranded rope of

<sup>1</sup> *Antiq. Jour.*, vol. X, no. 2, pp. 154-5.

<sup>2</sup> See Plate III, facing p. 88.

<sup>3</sup> *Iron Age Guide*, 1925, p. 150, illustration; and see fig. 17.

gold finished with two large terminal knobs. These knobs have the inner, opposite surfaces flat, and both these disc-like surfaces and the circumference of the terminals are richly incised. The motif of the designs in each case is linked circles. On the disc these form a triangle, with the space beyond the sides filled in with small pellets, which are also used in the border pattern. This torque is illustrated on page 124.

Familiarity with the comparatively few fine objects that chance has given us of the work of these pre-Roman dwellers in Somerset compels us to realize not only the material richness of their civilization, but also its high artistic excellence, and leaves us feeling that if the passing centuries have brought us many gifts, they have also obliterated much that we can ill spare.

At Weston, near Bath, two spoon-shaped bronze objects were found near a spring. They were  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, shaped like almost circular spoon bowls, with a disc for a handle. One was incised with a cross, and the other had a small hole perforated at the very edge of one side of the bowl. The discs were ornamented on one side with concentric circles, on the other with a flowing pattern of typical Keltic waves and curves. These objects have been found also in Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and France. It has been surmised that they may have been connected with the Druidical Cult, but of this there is no proof.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the most convincing evidence of the civilization of the Britons before the coming of the Romans is afforded by their coinage. Not only were currency bars of various, but standard denominations used, but also coins were produced in different parts of Britain. These were made of gold, silver, and tin, and the metal was sometimes of so debased a form that we are forcibly reminded of the practices of later centuries.

The coins, both of the Gauls and Britons, seem to have had as their prototype the Philippus of Macedon, made by Philip (died in 336 B.C.). They originally showed a classical head on the obverse. The Western imitators of these coins

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Jour.*, 26, pp. 60 and 61.

had often only worn models to go on, so that the figures become more and more degenerate, at last no one who had not seen the original and followed the devolution of the design could possibly guess what those at the end of the series were meant to represent. The earlier British coins were uninscribed, the later inscribed, but yet in the West both seem to have been in use together. A great hoard of coins, containing 10 gold, 232 silver and 4 second brass, was found at Nunney, near Frome, in 1860. It was described in the *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1 N.S., 1861. Apparently this hoard was hidden at the time of the Roman invasion. Inscriptions on coins are considered by Sir J. Evans to have begun just after Caesar's invasion, and probably later in the West. The latest seem to have belonged to the time of Claudius, after which the native currency apparently ceased.

A gold coin was found on Dolbury in 1813. It is of the usual degenerate horse type, and is now at Taunton.<sup>1</sup> Uninscribed silver coins were found in the Nunney hoard, of a degenerate horse type, another from Lansdown, one from Bath, one from Bathwick, and one from South Petherton, another from Shapwick, one from Charterhouse on Mendip, sixty-six in a mound of broken flint at Chard, and one just into Gloucestershire, at Southmead. One also from Kingsdown Camp was of the Nunney type, and two from Ham Hill. These all have the degenerate horse generally with three tails, and on a field in which he prances, pellets and other scattered geometrical forms. Tin coins of native manufacture have been found in the Glastonbury Lake Village and on Ham Hill. They belong to the first half of the first century A.D.

The Nunney hoard contained sixteen gold coins with the inscription ANTED with a head on the obverse and the three-tailed horse on the reverse, and another similar coin came from Freshford. The same name appears on coins of the Iceni in the east of England, and Evans speculates as to whether one Antedrigus ruled the Iceni and then possibly having been defeated in the east, came to

<sup>1</sup> Knight, *Heart of Mendip*, p. 207.

the west. This was in the time of Ostorius Scapula. Can we imagine that this alliance between east and west with the exclusion of the centre had some connexion with an alliance against the Romans on the part of the La Tène people, as against the settled farmers of the Hallstatt and early La Tène culture settled in the south and south-east of England?

At Brewham was found a gold coin inscribed VOCORIO-AD, and this is one of the type common to the western counties bearing on the obverse a kind of fern-leaf, and the horse on the reverse. Another of them came from Radstock. From near Frome there is another of the fern-leaf coins inscribed COMVX. This is now in the British Museum, but Sir J. Evans had two more from the same neighbourhood. In Street churchyard a gold coin inscribed COR was found in 1905. Gold fern-leaf coins were found at Frome and Nunney, while another gold fern-leaf coin with EISV was bought in Bristol. The Nunney hoard included twenty-seven base silver coins with a rude head in profile on the obverse and on the reverse the horse, and the letters SV-EL. These seem to have been contemporary with the Antedrigus coins, and so to have come at the end of the series.

The distribution map of the Early Iron Age finds shows that the people who made them lived mostly on the hills. The lake villages are, of course, an exception. The map is almost a blank for the north-west part of the county, but when the barrows on the Quantocks, Exmoor, and the Brendons have been more fully explored, it may be that some of them will be found to contain secondary interments of Hallstatt date. The discovery of Iron Age cemeteries may also possibly increase the range of the distribution of this culture. The camps, boundaries of Celtic fields, lynchets and other evidences of agriculture are dealt with in the chapters on camps and earthworks.

## CHAPTER VI

### ROMAN SOMERSET

THE Roman conquest of Britain did not begin until the year A.D. 43 (the date of the Claudian invasion), but the subjugation of part of the island was accomplished quickly, and many indications point to the probability that there had been much peaceful penetration before that date ; indeed, since the Romans were firmly established in Gaul and the relations between Gaul and Britain had been close for over a hundred years before the conquest of Britain began, it is not likely that our country was altogether cut off from Roman influence before the invasion proper. The speed with which the Mendip lead-mines were worked for the Roman Government within six years of the landing in 43, makes it seem probable that the Romans were well acquainted with Mendip lead, and that they may even have been purchasing it, before they undertook to work it themselves. The coins from Charterhouse include two of the Republican period, one of the Triumvirate and three of Tiberius.

On the whole, Roman remains in England are comparatively poor things compared with those from other parts of the Roman Empire, and with one or two exceptions, the Somerset remains are mediocre, even for England. The evidence seems to point to a scattered agricultural community, probably of Romanized natives, living on the villas or in their villages, and working as farmers. The most notable site is Bath, unique in Roman Britain because of the bathing establishments built to make use of its springs, of which substantial remains still exist ; while the first attraction to draw the Romans so far west was probably the Mendip lead.



The number of Roman coins that have been collected is amazing (50,000 is a low estimate), even considering that the occupation lasted for some 350 years; for in agricultural communities coin is not very much used in everyday life as a rule, and yet isolated finds of Roman coins have been frequent for centuries, and as many as fifty hoards are recorded. These hoarded coins were buried sometimes in pots, sometimes in caves or in the earth, and in one case in leather purses; they may reflect the terror that fell on the Roman world from the middle of the fourth century onwards, when the inroads of the barbarians became frequent.

Owning a long seaboard as she did, Somerset may have been especially vulnerable to these attacks, and more than one villa came to an end by means of fire. The coins bear dates from the late Republic down to the beginning of the fifth century, but the maximum period of the Roman occupation and prosperity seems to have been from about A.D. 270-350. After that, adversity visited the land, though some villas were occupied until at any rate the end of the fourth century.

The distribution of the villas shows that the Romans settled on good agricultural ground. They avoided the hills of the west, and, with the exception of Yatton, also the damp river plains, and they did not build on the bleak top of Mendip, except in so far as it was necessary to work the mines. Professor Haverfield divided the villas into five districts, and it is convenient to keep to his arrangement; in fact, his article on Roman Somerset in the *Victoria County History*, vol. I, is so excellent that a full survey in this book is unnecessary.<sup>1</sup>

As elsewhere in Britain, the villas exhibit two main types of ground plan, both designed to give the occupants the benefit of as much sunshine as possible. There is the

<sup>1</sup> Haverfield adds a gazetteer which makes it possible in the present work to save space by including in our gazetteer only the most important sites, those in fact at which something can to-day be seen, and sites discovered since the publication of the *Victoria County History*, vol. I, in 1906.

courtyard-house, often with separate blocks of buildings, and also the corridor-house peculiar to North Gaul and Britain. In this form of dwelling a corridor was built, off which many rooms opened, and at one or the other end of which there might be an enlargement. The houses were frequently paved with mosaic, or tessellated pavement, many examples of which remain; their walls were lined with painted stucco and they were provided with the usual type of bathroom, warmed by means of flue tiles and a hypocaust and furnace. The objects found in the houses are usually purely Roman in type. The pottery consists of Samian and sometimes Castor and rougher ware. Occasionally finds of metal show some trace of Celtic design, but generally speaking this beautiful native art seems to have been killed by the flood of Roman articles that came into or were made in the land.

Haverfield's first group of villas includes those near the Avon and in the north-east of the county. These comprise a villa at Bleadon, where it is said to have been on the site of a British settlement; and Farleigh, which had a tessellated pavement when it was excavated by the Rev. John Skinner in 1822.<sup>1</sup> Two villas in this group were at Bathford, another was at Langridge,<sup>2</sup> another was on Lansdown<sup>3</sup> in the 12-acre field. North Stoke, high on the hill above the Avon, has remains which are probably those of a Roman house or village, while at

<sup>1</sup> This gentleman was Rector of Camerton from 1800-39, and did much valuable archaeological work; his manuscripts (now in the British Museum) are still largely unpublished, and though they do not in many respects comply with modern standards of accuracy, they are often extremely useful. Phelps was beholden to Skinner for much of the information in his *History and Antiquities of Somersetshire*, 1836. See *Bath Field Club*, II, pp. 281-99.

<sup>2</sup> Villa dug since 1906, when it yielded pottery, an iron buckle, other small articles and a coin of Trajan.

<sup>3</sup> It was on Lansdown also that an unusual gold ornament was found, bearing effigies of twelve of the late emperors, and apparently designed for use as a pendant. Roman stone coffins were found on Lansdown and very frequently elsewhere in the vicinity of villas. Sometimes the skeletons were intact, but the grave furniture is usually unimportant.

Newton St. Loe, on the other side of the river, the mosaic floor was found covered with slabs of stone, as if to preserve it against the return of its owners. There was also a pavement at Burnett. At Brislington a villa was discovered in 1899, and was excavated by the Bristol Museum committee. It was a house of the corridor form, facing south-west. The finds were of the usual type, including rough Roman pottery together with a small quantity of Samian ware, window glass and glass beads, painted stucco and several pavements, one of which can be seen in the Bristol Museum. When the well was cleared out it yielded, besides human bones, seven pewter vessels, three of which are now fairly complete, and can also be seen at Bristol. The coins were all late, of the reigns between A.D. 265-361.<sup>1</sup> There seems to have been a villa at Long Ashton, as well as a hoard of coins, and possibly some sort of a house on Failand Hill. In this group may be included, perhaps, a villa on Clifton Down<sup>2</sup> and the two at Keynsham.

The first villa at Keynsham was discovered in May 1922, when excavations were being made for Messrs. Fry's new factory at Somerdale on the river flats on the left bank of the Avon just north of Keynsham village. Two stone coffins were found, three-quarters of a mile north of the Roman road from Bath to Avonmouth. The coffins were unusual, because they had lead linings. One was rounded at the head, and this contained a female skeleton; the other was a square at the head, with a male skeleton. There were no relics in the coffins, but 2 feet away there was a silver Denarius of Gordianus IV, A.D. 238-44, and near by were fragments of Romano-British pottery, coins of the late third and early fourth century B.C., a needle, roofing tiles and stone foundations.

Further digging proved this building to have been a small house, the ground plan of which was rectangular, measuring 35 feet 10 inches by 51 feet 3 inches. It was

<sup>1</sup> Clifton Antiq. Club, 1900, vol. V, pp. 78-97. *B. & G. Arch. Soc. Trans.*, XXIII, pp. 289-308, and XXIV, 283.

<sup>2</sup> *B. & G. Arch. Soc. Trans.*, XLI, p. 131.